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THE CENTURY BIBLE

A MODERN COMMENTARY

EDITED BY

PRINCIPAL W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

I—LXXII

EDITED BY

REV. PROFESSOR DAVISON, M.A., D.D.

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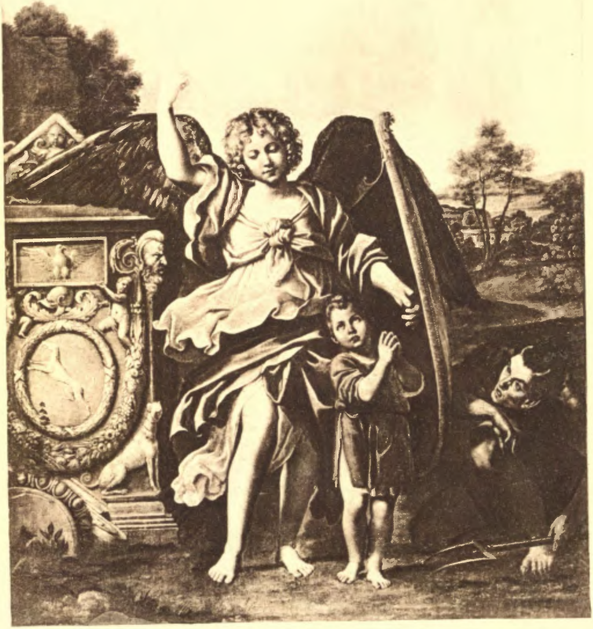

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.
DOMENICO ZAMPIERI (IL DOMENICHINO)

The Century Bible

A MODERN COMMENTARY

The Psalms

I—LXXII

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITED BY

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THE BOOK OF PSALMS

I—LXXII

INTRODUCTION

'Although all Divine Scripture doth breathe the grace of God, yet sweet beyond all others is the Book of Psalms.'
AMBROSE.

'Psalmody is the soul's fair weather, the arbiter of peace. It healeth the soul's ancient and inveterate wounds; . . . the sick it cherisheth, the whole it doth preserve. It softeneth the angry and doth sober the intemperate.'—BASIL.

'You may rightly call the Psalter a Bible in miniature.'
LUTHER.

'The choice and flower of all things profitable in other books the Psalms do both more briefly contain and more movingly express. . . . What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach?'—HOOKER.

'The Psalms stand up like a pillar of fire and light in the history of the early world. They lift us at once into an atmosphere of religious thought which is the highest that man has ever reached. They come with all the characteristic affections and emotions of humanity, everything that is deepest, tenderest, most pathetic, most aspiring, along with all the plain realities of man's condition and destiny, into the presence of the living God.'—R. W. CHURCH.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

I—LXXII

INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to the old interpreters, it is the province of Biblical Introduction to answer seven questions concerning the composition of each Book of the Bible—Who wrote it? When? Where? For what end? and the like. Such questions are always easier to ask than to answer; but in the case of the Psalms as understood by modern scholarship, the difficulties are peculiarly great, perhaps insuperable.

An attempt is made, however, to answer these questions as far as possible, partly in this general introduction, partly in the detailed introductions prefixed to the several Psalms. And, in the prevailing uncertainty and diversity of opinion, the author has tried to do two things—to give a general idea of the views accepted by recent critics, both the more conservative and the more advanced, and briefly to state his own opinion, without attempting to give his full reasons. Thus the reader will at the same time receive a measure of guidance, yet have some opportunity of judging for himself.

The notes appended to each Psalm are necessarily brief. Attention has largely been concentrated upon exegesis pure and simple, a discussion of the best translation available, with special emphasis upon the renderings of the Revised Version both in text and margin. The latter, it need hardly be said, forms an integral part of the Version, and is often more valuable than the text itself.

I. The Name and Character of the Book.

The Book of Psalms is a collection of a hundred and fifty sacred songs or poems, selected from Hebrew literature, extending over several centuries and arranged with care for a specific purpose. Ewald has said, 'We possess in the present Psalter the flower of the lyrical poetry of the Hebrews most suitable for public edification and instruction, out of all centuries from David down to the latest times.' If we change the phraseology into 'suitable for public worship and instruction,' with an emphasis on *worship*, the definition will be more accurate. The collection was not intended for worship alone, but that it is suited first and chiefly for the service of the temple is attested both by its character and its history.

The name by which it is known among the Jews is 'Praises' or 'Book of Praises,' but the word *Tehillim*, thus appropriately employed, is not the one recognized in the Book itself, only one Psalm (cxlv) being thus designated. Two other words, *Mizmor* and *Shir*, which are currently used in the titles, are better rendered by the English 'song': the former indicating a composition to be sung to a musical accompaniment, and the latter being a more general name, applicable as well to secular lyrics. The one name given in the Book itself to a collection of Psalms is 'prayers,' as in the note at the end of Ps. lxxii, 'The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.' The use of the word is significant, for a considerable proportion of the Psalms thus styled 'prayers of David' can hardly be described as direct invocations of God. But the spirit of the Psalter is one of prayer throughout, and a large part of its contents is prayer pure and simple. As Augustine in his *Confessions* writes, so to speak, on his knees, and reviews his whole life as in the sight of God, from time to time directly addressing Him, so the Psalmist, when rehearsing the history of Israel, or recalling his own experiences, or contemplating the glories of nature, has God ever in mind, and every line is perfumed with the incense of supplication. Complaints lose all character of murmuring, and joy is hallowed into thanksgiving, when both are reverently uttered in the inner chamber and poured into the ear of a gracious God.

It would be a mistake to use any descriptive title for the Book which would narrow the breadth of its scope or the comprehensiveness of its range. It is didactic, lyric, elegiac, by turns; it is various as human life, and its main feature is the bringing of human history with all its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, struggles and achievements, into the presence of God and the light of religion. The Book of Psalms is—itself. It refuses to be pressed exactly into any one of the categories which the ingenious classifiers of similar literary compositions have devised. Happily it has in English a distinctive name of its own, derived from the Greek, one by which through all time it will probably be distinguished.

The place occupied by the Book in the Canon of the Old Testament is this. The first portion of the Hebrew Scriptures to be collected and arranged was the 'Law,' comprising the five Books of the Pentateuch. Next, after the interval of a century, came the 'Prophets,' including the Books which we call historical, as well as those directly prophetical. To the third part of the Canon no distinctive name was given; it is known in Hebrew as *Kethubim*, 'writings,' in Greek as *Hagiographa*, 'sacred writings,' and in this portion the Psalter has usually occupied the first place in order, as for many reasons it is the most important. This is suggested by our Lord's words in Luke xxiv. 44, where he speaks of the things 'written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.' Such a book obviously claims a position of its own in the Canon of sacred Scripture. As the Law is mainly the declaration of God's will concerning the duties of Israel, as the histories contain the account of His dealings with the chosen people, as prophecy is the inspired utterance of holy men speaking in His name, so the Psalms exhibit the light of Israel's religion as reflected in the hearts and experience of its faithful sons. Thus 'what the heart is in man, the Psalter is in the Bible.'

II. FORMATION OF THE PSALTER.

How came the Book to be what it is? What is the history of its compilation, or rather its growth, for a book of this kind possesses a life of its own, and cannot be artificially produced by any literary machinery or apparatus?

In the Hebrew Bible, as now in our Revised Version, the Psalms are divided into five Books, Pss. i–xlii, xliii–lxxii, lxxiii–lxxxix, xc–cvi, cvii–cl. This division was known in the Christian Church as early as the second century, and it obtained still earlier among the Jews. It is recognized in the Midrash, which compares the five Books of the Law given by Moses to the five Books of Psalms given by David. The close of each Book is marked by a doxology, a practice not uncommon in the East, as Prof. Robertson Smith has shown in the case of certain collections of Arabic poems. This division into five parts must have been made early, because it is substantially recognized in the LXX Version. But it does not follow that it was made when the Psalter was first formed, still less that it corresponds exactly to successive stages in the history of the collections. There are indeed several evidences to the contrary.

Closer examination reveals indications of a gradual formation out of existing collections on somewhat different lines. We may point first to the 'editorial note,' as it may be called, appended to Ps. lxxii. It shows that at this point ends a certain collection of 'Davidic' compositions, and the writer knew of no other Psalms which went by the name of David. Another practical proof lies in the existence of duplicate forms of the same Psalm: compare Ps. xiv with liii, xl. 13–17 with lxx, and cviii with lvii. 7–11 and lx. 5–12. The conclusion we should draw from the latter fact is strengthened when we observe that with substantially the same subject-matter a different name for God is used; the same Psalm being therefore used on different occasions by different editors in arranging independent collections. This variation in the name of God cannot be quite satisfactorily accounted for, but it is certain it does not occur by chance. In Book I the name Yahweh (Jehovah) occurs 272 times, Elohim only 15 times; while in Book II Elohim is found 164 times and Yahweh only 30 times. In Book III the names are more evenly distributed; but it is found that if the Book be divided into two parts at Ps. lxxxiii, a similar division into Yahwistic and Elohistic sections is discernible, while in Books IV and V the name Yahweh decidedly predominates.

Other indications of gradual compilation are found in the titles, which will be more fully discussed in the next section. It is sufficient here to observe that almost all the Psalms in Book I are assigned to David, a group of eight Korahitic Psalms occurs in Pss. xlii–xlix, and eleven Asaphic Psalms in lxxii–lxxxiii. Another group of 'Davidic' compositions is found in Pss. li–lxx, while from Ps. xc onwards titles are rare, the Psalms being for the most part what the Jews called 'orphans'—as we say, anonymous. The subscription to Ps. lxxii, 'The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended,' is now appended to a Book which contains Psalms assigned to Asaph and the sons of Korah, but Ewald's conjecture has been generally accepted that Pss. xlii–l once stood after the Psalm now numbered lxxii. The following represents in outline the history of the formation of the Psalter, as far as it is possible for us to conjecture and reproduce it.

1. The earliest collection consisted of Pss. iii–xli: it was formed soon after the Exile, but contained many earlier compositions, probably from the time of David onwards.

2. Another 'Davidic' collection, Pss. li–lxxii, with the subscription lxxii. 20.

3. Certain Levitical collections, Pss. xlii–xlix being Korahitic, l and lxxiii–lxxxiii Asaphic, lxxxiv–lxxxviii Korahitic, and lxxxix 'of Ethan.'

4. A process of arrangement of (2) and (3), perhaps by an Elohistic editor, Pss. lxxxiv–lxxxix being added as a Yahwistic supplement.

5. Sundry short, independent groups or collections of Psalms are discernible, of which the Hallel, Pss. cxi–cxviii, and the Songs of Ascents, cxx–cxxxiv, are specimens.

6. From these, together with a considerable number of scattered Psalms, a large and generally homogeneous collection was formed, including Pss. xc–cl, the greater part of which were composed for purposes of public worship.

7. Thus far we find the Psalter divided into three parts, viz. Pss. i–xli, xlii–lxxxix, xc–cl. At a later stage the division into five Books was effected, a break being made at Ps. lxxii and again at cvi, suitable doxologies being arranged at the close of each. It is not possible to be sure what portion of the editing—e.g. the prefixing of Ps. i and the affixing of doxologies—was done at the formation of the smaller groups and what at the final stage; nor is it easy to say how far Psalms of comparatively late origin may have been inserted in collections formed earlier.

Such an outline is necessarily speculative in character. But good reasons may be assigned for marking out each one of the lines of cleavage indicated; and the history of later hymn-books, e. g. 'Wesley's Hymns,' 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' and Sankey's collection, presents similar phenomena on a humbler scale.

The present arrangement, therefore, is chronological only in broadest outline. For the most part, the earlier Psalms and collections are placed first, and personal Psalms occur as a rule earlier in the Psalter, while those dealing with national history or expressly composed for liturgical purposes are found in the later Books. But all such principles of association—if they may be called principles—are vague in character and loosely applied. Sufficient has been said to show that the collection had a long history, some features of which it is possible to recognize. It is not surprising if this history cannot now be exactly traced, and it would be a mistake to suppose that all the details of arrangement were carried out by rule. But the study of the last fifty years has done more to elucidate the subject than previous centuries, and it is not improbable that more light still may be shed upon it ere long.

When did the final process of collection begin? Assuming for the moment that as there were many sacred poems already in existence, so some of these *may* have been previously gathered into smaller collections not now traceable, and taking the Psalter as we have it, the first division containing Pss. i–xli must be post-Exilic. The evidence, as drawn from Pss. i, xiv, xxv and others, will be pointed out in the notes. It is also independently probable that at such a period, shortly after the return from captivity, some such work would be undertaken.

It is not easy to say when the process ended, i.e. to fix the limit beyond which no addition was made. But there are data which enable us to determine with some certainty the period when this work was practically complete. For example:—

1. The passage 1 Macc. vii. 17, written about 100 B.C., quotes Ps. lxxix as Scripture. This implies that the Psalm had been for some time included in a recognized collection.

2. The prologue to the Book of Ecclesiasticus, written B.C. 132, cites the fact that in the time of the writer's grandfather, Jesus the Son of Sirach (about 180 B.C.), a division of the Scriptures into a kind of threefold Canon, 'the law, the prophets and the other books of our fathers,' was recognized, and a Greek translation of these books was current in his own time. That is, as Prof. Robertson Smith has said, 'the Hebrew Psalter was completed and

recognized as an authoritative collection long enough before 130 B.C. to allow of its passing to the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria.'

3. The recent discovery of the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus has brought to light a passage in which several Psalms (cxxi, cxxxv, cxlviii, and others) are either imitated or quoted *verbatim*.

4. The evidence of 1 Chron. xvi shows that the writer (about 300 B.C.) had before him Pss. cv, xcvi and cvi, considerable portions of which he incorporates into his text.

5. The fact that the Greek translators (say about 160 B.C.) did not understand the musical and other notes prefixed to the Psalms shows that at that time these must have been ancient. This is confirmed by the absence of titles which marks the later portion of the Psalter.

6. The processes of collecting, arranging, prefixing titles, appending editorial notes and translating into Greek—which implies that the authority of the books translated was fairly well established—demand a considerable period for their accomplishment before the final result was reached.

7. Certain other Psalms have come down to us, known as 'Psalms of Solomon' or 'Psalms of the Pharisees,' the date of which can be fixed with tolerable certainty as about 60 B.C. The difference between these and the latest compositions in the Psalter is very great. Their tone on such subjects as the Messiah, the doctrine of angels and a future life, makes it certain that a very considerable interval of time must have elapsed for such change of beliefs to have come about. Prof. Kirkpatrick says that 'they are separated from the Psalter by an impassable gulf.'

In the light of these facts—to which sufficient weight has hardly been attached by the less conservative critics—it would appear most likely that the Psalter was practically complete by 180 B.C., or thereabouts. This is not intended to prejudge the question as to the admission of Maccabaean Psalms, on which something will be said later. It does, however, preclude the attempts recently made to assign a considerable portion of the Psalter—according to one or two critics nearly the whole—to the period B.C. 160–150. The process of collection then appears to have ranged through about three centuries from 450 to 180 B.C.

III. THE TITLES.

Prefixed to a large number of Psalms, especially in the first half of the Book, are certain inscriptions, or notes, or titles. These do not form a part of the Psalm itself, but were added, though in comparatively ancient times. Some of them indicate authorship, directly or indirectly, others refer to time of composition, while many have to do with the musical setting of the Psalm for worship.

One Psalm (xc) is attributed to Moses, seventy-three to David (fifty-five of these in the first two Books), two to Solomon, twelve to Asaph, eleven to the sons of Korah, one to Heman, and one to Ethan. The LXX Version ascribes twelve more Psalms to David than does the Hebrew, while others are attributed to Jeremiah, Haggai, and Zechariah.

It is not certain that the preposition translated 'of' means 'composed by.' It may mean this, and in many cases is evidently intended to do so. But this can hardly be supposed when the 'sons of Korah' are named, and it is clear that some latitude must be allowed. It is particularly to be observed that it was a later rule amongst the Jews that a Psalm without the name of an author was to be ascribed to the author named in the Psalm nearest preceding, and it is very likely that in a collection generally named 'of David' all Psalms would be ascribed to him, and these would bear his name if transferred to another collection, or used by another editor. The writer of Ps. lxxii. 20 knew of a certain collection as 'prayers of

David,' and any Psalm from this or any similar collection would naturally come to be known as a Psalm 'of David' and would be so quoted, e.g. Ps. cviii. In Heb. iv. 7 the whole Psalter is described as 'David'; and the book called 'Wesley's Hymns' from the first contained some compositions by other authors, many of them edited and modified by John Wesley himself, whilst in later editions the proportion of Charles Wesley's hymns has been decidedly diminished.

It is noticeable that no author is named after the time of Solomon, and that in 2 Chron. xxix. 30 it is said that Hezekiah commanded the Levites to praise the Lord 'with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer.' The fact that in the LXX some of these titles are combined in an inconsistent way shows, as do a few of the Hebrew titles, that traditions were preserved, even when they were not understood.

Examination of these titles shows that their evidence is generally uncritical, in many cases quite misleading, and as a whole is of little value. A number of Psalms attributed to David were certainly not written by him, and in the case of many others the probabilities are decidedly against such a supposition. The Aramaisms, or debased Hebrew, of Ps. cxxxix, the tame and composite character of such Psalms as lxxxvi, put Davidic authorship out of the question. Acrostics such as Pss. xxv, xxxiv and xxxvii can hardly have been his. It is questionable whether the use of the word translated 'temple,' e.g. in Pss. v and xxvii, is not decisive against Davidic authorship, and similar doubt exists in relation to the phrase 'holy hill.' But the decision does not turn upon the use of single expressions. The reader has only to consider carefully the whole situation described, or implied, in the majority of 'Davidic' Psalms, to see that they are not suitable to David at all, either as a fugitive from Saul or as a victorious monarch and founder of a dynasty. Pss. xx and xxi refer to a king, but were almost certainly not written by a king. Many Psalms describe the fearfulness of a sufferer under an oppressive government such as David could never have felt, and it requires serious straining of language to make some of the Psalms supposed to be written during Saul's persecution to fit the situation at all. And in other cases, whilst certain expressions in a Psalm might have been used by David—e.g. Pss. lv. 12, 13 in relation to Ahithophel—other parts of it would have been quite inappropriate in his lips.

Some of the Psalms 'of Asaph' (lxxiv, lxxix, lxxx) obviously refer to the destruction of Jerusalem or to the Exile, if not to a later period, while at least some of those attributed to David must have been written in whole or in part after the return from captivity.

Under these circumstances we conclude that for the determination of authorship the titles are quite untrustworthy. It does not follow, however, that they are useless. The phrase 'of the sons of Korah' almost certainly points to a collection of Psalms bearing that name, either written or preserved by members of the Levitical guild or family of Korah, and the name of Asaph may be similarly used. And the title 'of Solomon' attached to Pss. lxxii and cxxvii may point to the fact that the mention of 'the king's son' and the 'building of the house' suggested Solomon's name.

Some thirteen titles refer to the occasion on which the Psalm was supposed to be written, and these all refer to David. Eight Psalms—vii, xxxiv, lii, liv, lvi, lvii, lix and cxlii—are assigned to the time of Saul's persecution; Pss. xviii and lx to his victories; Ps. li to his great sin; Pss. iii and lxiii to his flight from Absalom. On this the most that can be said is that in some cases there is a probability in the theory of the title, while in other cases the supposition is wellnigh impossible. Each case will be discussed in the introduction to the Psalm in question.

The titles which refer to the musical setting or liturgical use of the Psalms require separate consideration. Two of the most common phrases found in the Psalms—the latter not in the titles—are **For the chief Musician** and **Selah.** The former is found fifty-five times, almost entirely in the first three Books. It is tolerably certain that the word here used means the precentor or conductor of the temple-choir, whilst the meaning of the preposition is not so clear. It has usually been understood to indicate that the Psalm was intended for use in the temple services. It has been objected, however, that in that case we might expect to find it frequently prefixed to the later Psalms, as these are eminently liturgical in character, and that 'for' should be rendered 'of,' and understood to mean that the Psalm in question belonged to an older book known as 'The Precentor's Collection.' This argument from silence in the later Books would, however, prove too much, since almost all musical notation is absent from Books IV and V. The proof which the word affords of the close connexion between the Psalms and the worship of the temple remains the same in either case.

The word 'Selah' is found seventy-one times in the Psalter, usually only once or twice in each Psalm, though occasionally oftener. Most of the Psalms in which it occurs are in the earlier Books, and nearly all are of those marked 'For the Precentor.' It is now generally agreed that Selah is a musical term, a direction as to the style of the interlude or accompaniment to be played by instruments at the point in question. The Greek translation *diapsalma* points in this direction, but some other versions and the ancient Jewish traditions give the meaning 'for ever,' which has no etymological support and is probably erroneous. The word furnishes another illustration of the obscurity which early gathered round the musical notation of the Jews, but we shall probably not be far wrong if we understand Selah as a direction to the musicians to strike up more loudly during an interval of singing, or while the singing proceeded. It has also been suggested that the direction was rather to singers than players, and that at the point marked by the word, the congregation were to chant a response or a benediction. When the instances in which Selah occurs are carefully examined, it is very difficult to generalize—to perceive, that is, any special features which the passages have in common, which would make an interlude or a 'forte' accompaniment appropriate. The word does indeed almost always occur at the end of a stanza. **Higgaion** occurs once with Selah (Ps. ix. 16), and in Ps. xcii. 3 is translated 'a solemn sound.' It has been understood to mean 'joyfully resounding music,' but more probably refers to solemn, meditative strains.

Neginoth, six times in the Psalter (compare Neginah in Ps. lxi and Hab. iii. 19), indicates, as the Revised Version shows, an accompaniment of stringed instruments, while **Nehiloth** in Ps. v means wind instruments or 'to the accompaniment of flutes.' **Alamoth,** Ps. xlvi, which appears to be connected with the Hebrew word for 'maiden' and to correspond to our 'soprano,' is perhaps best understood of an instrument, a viola or tenor-violin; just as **Sheminith** in Pss. vi and xii, which means eighth or lower octave, would mean an instrument corresponding to our violoncello or double-bass. **Gittith** also in Pss. viii, lxxxi, lxxxiv was understood by the Targum to mean 'belonging to Gath,' and to refer to an instrument of a particular shape or type. The view is now preferred that it is the name of a tune, perhaps originally that of a vintage-song, to which the Psalm was sung.

Some phrases in the titles are probably names of tunes or popular airs which came to be known by name, according to the opening words of the secular songs with which they were associated. Prof. W. R. Smith has adduced parallels to this practice from the Arabic, and it is familiar enough amongst ourselves. It is not long since a well-known hymn used to be sung to the tune of 'Ye banks and braes.' The following are specimens of such titles: **Aijeleth-hash-Shahar,** Ps. xxii, 'The hind of the dawn'; **Al-Tashheth,** Pss. lvii, lviii, lix, lxxv, 'Destroy not'—possibly the beginning of a vintage-song (compare Isa. lxv. 8, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it'); **Jonath-elem-re'hokim,** Ps. lvi, 'The dove of the distant terebinths'; **Muth-labben,** Ps. ix, is a difficult phrase to render, either with the accepted pointing or with any other. It might conceivably mean 'Die for the son' or 'Death makes white,' but it is enough to explain it as the name of a tune. **Mahalath** in Ps. liii and **Mahalath Leannoth** in Ps. lxxxviii are understood by the Revised Version in the same sense.

Maschil is found prefixed to thirteen Psalms, chiefly in Books II and III. It has usually been understood to mean a 'didactic' Psalm, as it seems to be derived from a root which signifies 'to be wise' or 'to instruct.' But the Psalms which it introduces are not specially didactic or contemplative, and the 'skilfulness' which the word indicates may more probably be referred to the elaborate character of the musical accompaniment. The same may be true of **Michtam** (Pss. xvi and lvi–lx; compare also Isa. xxxviii. 9), which has been connected with one root which means 'gold,' and with another which means to 'inscribe.' But the fact that the 'Michtam' Psalms have few features in common points to an interpretation which applies to the music rather than to the subject-matter. **Shiggaion,** again, derived from a root 'to wander'—see Ps. vii and compare Hab. iii. 1—has been understood by Ewald and Delitzsch to mean a dithyrambic song, one characterized by much variety of feeling or irregularity of construction. But a musical reference is more probable. Ps. xlv has a fivefold title. Some of the phrases have already been explained. A **Song of Loves** probably means a song concerning that which is lovely, or, as the first verse expresses it, 'my matter is goodly.' **Shoshannim** means 'lilies'; compare **Shushan Eduth,**

'Lily of the testimony,' in Ps. lx. Both these inscriptions probably refer to tunes.

Some of the titles refer to the liturgical use of the Psalms in question. The meaning of **the Dedication of the House** in Ps. xxx is discussed in its place, but it is not improbably a later addition of a liturgical kind. So with **to bring to remembrance** or 'to make memorial' in Pss. xxxviii and lxx. This phrase refers to the *Azkarah* or offering of incense, and the Psalm of thanksgiving (Ps. c) to be sung at the time of thank-offering. **To teach** in Ps. lx may mean that the Psalm was to be carefully learned and recited, as is said of Moses' song in Deut. xxxi. 19 and the martial song of 2 Sam. i. 17, 18.

There remain the Pss. cxx–cxxxiv, called in A. V. 'Songs of Degrees,' in R. V. **Songs of Ascents,** a title probably given in the first instance to a small collection of Psalms made for a special purpose, since the plural word 'Ascents' is used for each several Psalm and represents the name originally given to the whole group. The word has been variously explained. We may reject without much hesitation the theory that these Psalms were sung upon the fifteen steps which led from the court of the women to the court of Israel in the second temple; as well as that which refers the 'ascent' to the 'step-like' literary structure of each Psalm, in which each verse forms a kind of advance by taking up a word or phrase from its predecessor and repeating it with emphasis or additions. The two most probable explanations of 'ascents' refer to the 'going up' from Babylon, or return to Palestine from the Exile, see Ezra vii. 9; and the 'going up' to Jerusalem from the country at the times of the great festivals; in each case the songs in question being sung upon the journey. The fact that the same word is used of the return from Babylon is in favour of the former theory, whilst the plural form of the word favours the latter. Amongst moderns the latter view is most generally accepted.

An early Jewish tradition informs us that in the worship of the second temple a special Psalm was sung on each day of the week at the time of the offering of the morning sacrifice. The only indication that we have of this custom in the Hebrew is found in the title of Ps. xcii, which is said to be 'a Song for the Sabbath Day.' But in the LXX Version the special Psalm of the first day of the week is the twenty-fourth, of the second day the forty-eighth; whilst the ninety-fourth was sung on the fourth day and the ninety-third on the sixth day of the week. The Psalms for the other days may be gathered from the Mishna—the eighty-second Psalm being assigned to the third day and the eighty-first to the fifth day of the week.

On the whole subject of the titles it may be said that, whilst not contemporaneous with the Psalms themselves, they are of ancient origin and give valuable information of more kinds than one. They are not to be relied upon for the ascertaining of date or authorship, but they help considerably in the attempt to understand the earlier grouping of the Psalms, and, as Prof. Robertson Smith said, 'their combined evidence is strong enough to prove that in both Davidic collections, or at least in the first, there is a substantial element that really goes back to David.'

The fact that some of the technical words are used in other Books—see 1 Chron. xv. 20, 21 and Hab. iii. 1 and 19—while titles generally are wanting in Books IV and V of the Psalter, and were not understood by the Greek translators, is of some service in determining their date. But the obscurity which still surrounds the meaning of many of the terms employed makes it impossible to rest any great weight of argument upon their use.

IV. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

The fixing of the date of a collection obviously takes us but a little way in determining the age, still less the authorship, of each individual Psalm. The final collection must be subsequent to the date of the latest Psalm, but the earliest may be centuries older. Since the evidence of the titles has proved to be uncritical and untrustworthy, we are driven to other sources to ascertain approximately the time and circumstances of the composition of the Psalms severally.

The evidence available is partly external, partly internal, but neither is as helpful or conclusive as we could wish. It is part of the excellence of the Psalter as a book of devotion for all time, that the writers did not give to their prayers and praises a closely local and historical character, or crowd them with strictly personal experiences. The references to events are vague and general: it is almost amusing to observe the diversity of times and incidents to which different commentators find allusion in the same Psalm. Then the habit of modifying the phraseology of a Psalm to suit a fresh occasion, or of adding verses for liturgical purposes, must not be forgotten. Traces of such modification are not scanty in the Psalter as we have it, and if, as is probable, the sacred songs had been orally handed on for generations, the original must have been considerably altered before it reached its final form.

Unfortunately also, the evidence of language does not afford much help. The Hebrew of the Old Testament, in the hands of the Massoretic scribes who settled the received text as it has come down to us, introduced a large measure of uniformity into the usage, spelling and vocalization of the words. A progress in the language of the Old Testament writings is discernible, but the changes represent only what may be called linguistic colouring, and apart from the approximation in later times of the Hebrew to the kindred Western Aramaic dialect, it is difficult to apply the test of language to prove an earlier or later date.

There are, however, a number of general considerations adducible which at least enable us to form a general idea of the period within which we may range the composition of the Psalms. Other specimens of Hebrew poetry have come down to us. The song of Moses in Exod. xv is acknowledged by most critics to be in substance Mosaic, though additions appear to have been made to it before it was inserted in the Elohistic narrative. The 'song of Moses' in Deut. xxxii is generally assigned to the eighth century B.C. The song of Deborah in Judges v is described even by the more advanced critics as probably contemporaneous with the events it describes. The song of Hannah in 1 Sam. ii probably belongs to the earlier period of the Monarchy, while the lament over Saul and Jonathan in 2 Sam. i is allowed to be genuinely Davidic. Other relics of Hebrew lyrical poetry are the thanksgiving of Isa. xii, the dirge of Hezekiah in Isa. xxxviii, the prayer of Habakkuk in Hab. iii and that of Jonah in Jonah ii. These poems may with some confidence be said to illustrate the general character of poetical composition in the period from Hezekiah to the Exile, though some critics, especially in the two latter cases, are disposed to date them after the Exile. The Book of Lamentations was written in all probability soon after the Exile, not by Jeremiah, but by more than one author. It forms, however, a poetical composition of a very elaborate character. The acrostics it contains represent an advanced period of poetical art, and it is not unlikely that a portion of the Book was composed during the Babylonish captivity.

Additional evidence concerning the history of religious poetry in Israel may be gathered from such passages as Ps. cxxxvii, where the captives are represented as being asked to sing 'one of the songs of Zion,' and Isa. lxiv. 11, in which we read that the 'holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire.' In Jer. xxxiii. 11 we find a most interesting quotation from the hymns in which the praises of God were thus sung. In describing the coming restoration of the city and the temple, Jeremiah says that again shall be heard the voice of bridegroom and of bride and 'the voice of them that say, Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that bring sacrifices of thanksgiving into the house of the Lord.' The language here quoted as that of the sanctuary in Jeremiah's time corresponds exactly to the thanksgivings of what are generally recognized as the later liturgical Psalms; e.g. Pss. cvi, cxxxvi, &c. More general references to the existence and use of sacred songs in connexion with the religious festivals may be found in Isa. xxx. 29, Amos v. 23, and elsewhere.

The Books of Chronicles furnish evidence of their own which can only be briefly and generally described here. These Books, dating from the fourth century B.C., present the views of the time with regard to the history of the temple-worship. It may be granted that the writer does not exhibit, perhaps did not aim at, historical accuracy in the modern sense of the phrase, the numbers cited being in some instances incredibly large. But it is clear that the compiler had access to earlier authorities, and the traditions of his own time possess a weight and significance of their own, even if it be understood that there was a disposition then—as there has always been in the history of religion—to antedate the origin of institutions esteemed sacred and authoritative. The evidence of the Chronicler, while it must not be pressed in detail, at least goes to show that about 330 B.C. the temple-worship had been highly elaborated, and its arrangements were so sacred and time-honoured that there was a disposition to ascribe them to David himself.

From all this it may be certainly gathered that at the time of the Exile religious poetry amongst the Jews exhibited the characteristics of an advanced and fairly matured art. That before the Exile the worship of God in the temple was maintained with praise and thanksgiving very similar to that which is contained in the Psalter. That for centuries before this, songs, both sacred and secular, had been composed, specimens of which have come down to us. But in proportion as we travel back in the literature, evidence on this matter becomes comparatively scanty, and the poetical compositions which certainly belong to the period before the eighth century B.C. are few, whilst even these may have been modified in process of transmission. It must be remembered in addition, however, that Eastern oral tradition, especially in the matter of poetry, is tenacious and conservative, and that it is quite credible that songs, whether directly religious or not, were composed early and faithfully handed on for some generations before they were definitively embodied in extant literature.

That a considerable number of Psalms are at least pre-Exilic seems obvious if the natural and obvious interpretation of the words is admitted. Those which directly refer to the king must be so, unless one of two or three far-fetched explanations be admissible. The application of the term 'king' to Judas Maccabaeus or Simon would be scouted as impossible, were such a supposition necessary to prove the early date of a Psalm. Equally incredible is the theory that after the Exile the nation was styled 'king,' just as Israel was sometimes called the 'son' or 'servant' of Jehovah. The cases are clearly not parallel, and such straining of language should not be permitted by sound criticism. Pss. ii, xviii, xx, xxi, xlv, lxxii, and others may accordingly stand as representative of pre-Exilic psalmody, and they correspond in style and character with other poetical compositions of the period of the Monarchy. It is not so easy, however, to assign any of them to a particular reign, or even to a century. It is natural to associate the language of Ps. xlvi, and perhaps of xlviii and lxxvi, with the deliverance of Jerusalem at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, and some of the phraseology used suits that notable event better than any other the record of which has come down to us. Pss. ii and xlv again may be much more easily and naturally interpreted of a king in the earlier or middle period of the Monarchy than of any subsequent time: and while it is quite possible that a later poet has dramatized and idealized the situation, such a view ought not to be adopted if there be no signs of a later hand in its literary composition. The period of Jeremiah, again, is one to which a considerable number of Psalms may with great probability be referred, even if none are the composition of the prophet himself.

The chief point of interest with many readers, however, is concerned with the name of David. Is it to be understood, men are asking, that whereas for centuries it was believed that David wrote with his own hand a considerable portion of the Psalter, so considerable that the whole Book was called by his name, now there is not even a single Psalm of which we may be sure that it has come from his hand? The facts are even so. But it must be added that the difficulty lies in establishing the *certainty* of Davidic authorship. Probabilities will be differently estimated. A few distinguished scholars refuse to allow a pre-Exilic date to any of the Psalms, and Prof. Driver holds 'with tolerable confidence that very few of the Psalms are earlier than the seventh century B.C.' Many, however, are still persuaded, not only that a goodly proportion of the Psalms in the earlier Books are pre-Exilic, but that many have come from the pen of David himself. This view is held, however, as an opinion based upon the probabilities of the case, not as by any means demonstrable with the amount of evidence at our disposal. As the subject is important, it may be examined a little more closely.

In favour of the Davidic authorship of some Psalms, it may be said that the ancient and persistent tradition ought to count for something. It is not necessary for this purpose to contend that the title 'of David' always implies the tradition that David wrote the Psalm in question. But that in many cases it must have meant this to the writer of the note is obvious, for the occasion is often specified. And we have seen that the Chronicler habitually refers to David as the founder of psalmody. The Davidic authorship of the elegy in 2 Sam. i is not denied, but it is said that David wrote no sacred poems. The description in 1 Sam. xvi. 18 of the son of Jesse as 'cunning in playing' does not, it is true, imply skill in poetical composition, nor does the lament for Abner in 2 Sam. iii. 33, nor the description of David before the ark in 2 Sam. vi. 14, take us far in that direction. Nor can the description of David given in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, translated in both A. V. and R. V. as 'the sweet Psalmist of Israel,' be relied upon to prove that the writer regarded David as a Psalmist. The phrase may be rendered literally, 'pleasant in the songs of Israel' (see R. V. marg.), and may mean no more than is told us in 1 Sam. vii. 18, that David as a hero was celebrated in popular song. The context, however, seems to imply that more than this was in the mind of the writer, who must not be taken to be the compiler of the main portion of the narrative of the Book. Amos vi. 5, moreover, speaks only of 'those who devise for themselves instruments of music like David,' and on any interpretation this passage does nothing to prove that David was a writer of Psalms.

None the less, the tradition was early and persistent, and it should not be set on one side without due cause shown. A clear proof of this is found in 2 Sam. xxii, where a Psalm practically identical with Ps. xviii is ascribed to David. Granting that this appendix to the second Book of Samuel cannot claim the date and authority which attaches to the main portion of the Book, still its evidence is valuable, and it seems likely that the brief introduction to the Psalm describing the occasion is taken from the historical Book. There is nothing in the Psalm itself directly inconsistent with Davidic authorship. A portion of the Psalm, it is true, appears to fit a later date better, including verses 49 and 50 which make mention of David by name. The details will be discussed in the notes upon the Psalm itself, but here it may be said that those who assign a much later date to the composition are constrained to admit that the writer has thrown himself with great skill and success into the position of David at the time described, and several who are chary of ascribing any Psalms to David are disposed to make an exception in this case.

It may be added that in addition to the existence of ancient tradition, and the direct testimony of 2 Sam. xxii, the proved existence of early fragments of sacred song and the admitted Davidic authorship of the song in 2 Sam. i make it *a priori* probable that this tradition is well based, and it is unlikely that all the sacred poems of so distinguished a writer have disappeared. The objection that David was a warrior and therefore could not have been a Psalmist, or that his lapse into sin in the matter of Bath-sheba and Uriah makes it impossible that he could have written in a spiritual and devotional strain, will not bear close examination. It is not argument first to reject all alleged Davidic Psalms and then to say that, since David is represented only as a secular hero, he could not have been a sacred poet; but some such reasoning in a circle is unfortunately not a rare phenomenon. The real strength of the case against Davidic Psalms lies not in what Prof. Cheyne calls 'the history of art'—for it is easily conceivable, if it be not actually proved, that poetry in Israel had made considerable advance in the time of David—but from 'the history of religion,' as he and others have conceived it. Granted that the religious history of Israel was what many modern critics assert, it becomes absolutely necessary to bring down the date of the Psalms to a comparatively late period. But that is the very point at issue. It cannot be discussed here, but those who study carefully what may be called 'the necessary presuppositions,' i. e. the religious condition of Israel implied in the writings of the prophets Hosea and Amos, the dates of whose prophecies are known, will probably come to the conclusion that religious knowledge was further advanced in the ninth and tenth centuries B.C. than many modern critics are willing to admit.

But we are brought to this point at last—that while there are strong probabilities that David wrote Psalms, that these have not all perished and that some of them are found in the Psalter, it is impossible to mark out any—if the evidence of 2 Sam. xxii be rejected—of which we may say that David and no other is certainly its author. Even if Ps. xviii be assuredly his, we have only literary probability—a notoriously inconclusive argument—to go upon to carry us further. Amongst recent critics and commentators, Duhm may be said to represent one extreme in his contention that few Psalms are older than the Maccabaean period, whilst Cheyne and others place the earliest considerably after the Exile. The other extreme, represented by Delitzsch in his earlier years, would assign forty or fifty Psalms to David's pen. Dr. Driver is content to fall back upon a *non liquet*, though, as stated above, he does not incline to an early date for any Psalms; while Prof. Kirkpatrick, proceeding with the combined caution and freedom which becomes sound scholarship, does not hesitate to take up a much more conservative position and assigns a considerable number of Psalms to David and the period immediately after him. The present writer, as will appear from the notes that follow, is inclined to think the truth lies somewhere between the conclusions of the two last-named eminent English scholars. But it may be said with confidence that all determinations of date must with our present evidence be regarded as approximate only, while the limits which a sound and moderate criticism assigns to hypothesis enable us to form an estimate sufficiently near for all practical purposes of exegesis and edification.

The question whether any Psalms belonging to the Maccabaean period are found in the Psalter has been much debated, and it cannot be said that it is even yet finally determined by general agreement. According to some critics, as already said, we owe to this stirring epoch in Jewish history a large portion of the Book of Psalms, and there can be little question that the events of the Maccabaean rising were such as to call forth Psalms similar to many in the Psalter, if inspired lyrists were forthcoming to write them. What we know of the period makes this not improbable, and it is quite possible that the collection was not so absolutely closed, say by 150 B.C., that no additional Psalms could be inserted after this date. But when we turn to the actual conditions, as far as we can trace them, difficulties arise which these general considerations do not dissipate. The Psalms which from internal evidence alone we should be disposed to class as Maccabaean are xliv, lxxiv, lxxix and lxxxiii, and from very early times this has been recognized by interpreters. If these had been found towards the end of the fifth Book without titles there would be little difficulty. But they are found in the second and third Books, and one of them is described both in the original Hebrew and in the Greek translation as 'a Psalm of Asaph.' It is difficult to understand how a Psalm written so late as B.C. 150 could be found in such a place under such circumstances. Hence the opponents of the Maccabaean date urge that the language of the Psalms in question might well be understood of earlier times of desolation. This may be true of parts of these Psalms, but there are isolated expressions, such as the reference to synagogues in Ps. lxxiv. 8, which would seem to necessitate a later date. Prof. Cheyne, who is in this country the strongest advocate of Maccabaean Psalms, has enumerated four criteria by means of which these may be determined. Three of these tests unfortunately are too vague to be of much use: 'a uniquely strong church feeling, an intensity of monotheistic faith, and an ardour of gratitude for some unexampled stepping forth of the one Lord Jehovah into history.' The fourth is the test which we would fain apply in this and all similar cases: 'some fairly distinct allusions to Maccabaean circumstances; I mean expressions which lose half their meaning when interpreted of other times.' It is such distinct allusions, in the sense of decisive historical references, which are notably lacking throughout the Psalter. An examination of the best and most recent commentaries will show that modern scholars are not convinced that many allusions are to be found in any Psalm so decidedly Maccabaean that they would 'lose half their meaning' if interpreted of other periods, and Prof. Cheyne in some of his applications and interpretations stands absolutely alone.

Under these circumstances there is nothing to be done but to pronounce the question still open. It would, in the writer's opinion, be a mistake to close the door against the possibility—nay, the probability—of Davidic Psalms at one end of the historic line and of Maccabaean Psalms at the other. But he also holds that the number belonging to either class is not very large, and that it is impossible to be certain as to how many each class contains, but that the approximate results which have been attained in both cases are sufficient for all practical purposes of interpretation.

On the whole subject it may be said at this stage that if some disappointment be felt at this absence from the Psalms of definite historical marks, and the consequent measure of uncertainty regarding authorship, there are compensating advantages on the other side. Most readers would like to be sure that David wrote Pss. xxiii and li; Ps. lxix would acquire fresh interest if it were known to be written by Jeremiah in his dungeon; and both Ps. lxxiv and the period of Judas Maccabaeus would be illuminated if we could certainly associate them together. Much controversy concerning Ps. cx would be ended could it be known without doubt either that David wrote it, or that Nathan wrote it concerning David, or that it belongs to a much later period. It is not a mere question of satisfying a natural curiosity. It is reasonable to say that we could not only understand the Psalms better, but enjoy them and profit by them more, if we knew their authors and the circumstances of their composition. This is true on the one side, just as it is true that special interest is given to the reading of the Scriptures by a visit to Jerusalem or the Lake of Galilee, and that sacred impressions derived from reading the Book of Genesis or the fourth chapter of John are greatly deepened by the sight of Jacob's Well or the Cave of Machpelah. Every touch of the concrete which enables us to give reality to the abstract, all local and historical colour which visualizes our imaginations for us, is valuable. But for the purposes of spiritual instruction localization has its dangers. The Lord Jesus Christ said, 'It is expedient for you that I go away,' though his disciples found it hard to believe this, and were slow to understand the gain which was theirs through the coming of that other Comforter. So the spiritual value of the Psalms is unquestionably increased by the absence of those definite historical allusions which would enable us at once to determine their date and authorship, while at the same time the references are close enough for us to illustrate the meaning from various events of Israelitish history to which, with a little modification, they would not inaptly apply. The human touches in the Psalms are frequent enough and personal enough to bring home to readers in all generations the fact that these spiritual songs were written by men compassed with the infirmities, exposed to the dangers and troubled by the woes and doubts and fears of our common humanity, while the particularization of circumstances is not minute enough to prevent saints of all countries and periods from making the language their own. The study of Wordsworth's poems is made much more interesting by the notes which he has left concerning the time and place of their composition, but their higher value is apt to be diminished by a diversion of the reader's attention. And if the student of the Psalms to-day cannot attach each several composition to a definite time and place, he may the more readily enter into the true spirit of words which were intended not for one age, but for all time.

V. POETICAL STRUCTURE.

The amount of Hebrew poetical literature that has come down to us is very considerable, if we include in it only the Books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Lamentations, and scattered poems which occur in the historical and prophetical Books. But it is clear that the extant poetry forms only part of a greater whole. Two very early collections of poems are mentioned, which have been lost. One of these is called the 'Book of the Wars of Jehovah' in Num. xxi. 14, and an extract from it referring to Moab is given. It was evidently a collection of ancient war-songs, and the way in which it is quoted testifies to the early existence, not only of poems, but of collections of poems. In Joshua x. 13 an extract is given from the 'Book of Jashar' (the Upright), in which collection David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan was included, 2 Sam. i. 18. There can be little doubt that this Book contained verses in praise of heroes and worthies of Israel, whose memory for various reasons it was thought desirable to preserve. We are told also in 1 Kings iv. 32 that Solomon 'spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five,' but these are not to be hastily identified with the 'proverbs' that have come down to us under his name. The Book of Amos gives further testimony on this subject. In vi. 5 we read of drinking-songs which were sung by the rich and luxurious of the prophet's time, while in v. 23 there is mention of 'the noise of thy songs and the melody of thy viols' in connexion with the service of the sanctuary, service which was intended to be, but was not, acceptable to Jehovah. It does not follow, of course, that such 'songs' consisted of careful devotional compositions, but at least the germs of subsequent 'Psalms' must be referred to, and most of these have probably perished.

The specimens which have come down to us, however, amply suffice to show the variety of the occasions on which songs were sung and the purposes for which poetry was employed. The literature of 'folk-songs' in all nations is fairly large. It is easy to understand that in primitive times that which was intended to be remembered would be embodied in (perhaps rude) poetical form. But for weddings and funerals, for war and peace, for harvest and vintage, for national and for religious purposes alike, verse rather than prose was used in early times amongst the Hebrews as amongst other peoples. One very early fragment has reached us in 'The Song of the Well,' which is recorded in Num. xxi. 17. It celebrates the joy characteristic of Eastern countries when a spring is discovered and a well is dug. Another example is the sword-song of Lamech in Gen. iv. 23. Harvest-songs are perhaps referred to in Isa. ix. 3, as vintage-songs certainly are in lxv. 8. The fragment recorded in Num. xxi. 27-30 is attributed to them 'that speak in proverbs,' but the phrase which would convey to our ears the idea intended would be they 'that sing in ballads,' were not the associations of the word somewhat too loose and trivial. Many critics consider that specimens of the early wedding-songs have come down to us in Canticles, or even that the whole Book consists of a collection of songs similar to the *wasf* of modern bridal ceremonies amongst the Arabs. It is much more probable that a writer familiar with such songs has adapted this style of composition for another and a higher purpose. The meaning of Ps. xlv will be dealt with in its place. But specimens of the dirge or elegy have been preserved. Jeremiah (ix. 17) refers to the songs of the mourning women, who were accustomed to 'take up a wailing' for the dead, sometimes doubtless in inarticulate fashion, but sometimes repeating panegyrics such as are contained in the lament for Abner in 2 Sam. iii. 33, and David's lament for Saul so often referred to. Again, the 'riddles' which displayed Samson's wit (see Judges xiv. 14) or Solomon's or Agur's wisdom (see Prov. i. 6 and xxx. 15, 18) must be taken into account when the different forms of Hebrew poetical literature are enumerated.

Much more important are the national songs or poems, running to considerable length, of which examples are to be found in the Song at the Passage of the Red Sea, Exod. xv; the Song of Deborah, Judges v; the Blessing of Jacob, Gen. xlix; the Song of Moses and Blessing of Moses, Deut. xxxii and xxxiii. In all probability the form in which some of these poems have come down to us represents a later development of an earlier and simpler 'song.' It does not come within the scope of this introduction to deal with the structure of Hebrew poetry outside the Psalms, but it is clear that our immediate subject demands a glance at the wider field. For the Psalms are the fine, consummate flower of a plant, the whole growth of which should be fairly understood if the bloom itself is to be rightly appreciated.

Hebrew poetry is for the most part either lyric or gnomic. There is no Hebrew epic, nor did dramatic poetry, strictly speaking, exist amongst the Jews, though dramatic elements in certain poems are not wanting, e.g. in Job and Canticles. The poetry of the Psalms is, of course, lyric in character, though in some few instances an approach is made to the gnomic and didactic strains of (say) the opening chapters of the Book of Proverbs.

In form Hebrew poetry is of the simplest. Hence the difficulty in some cases of drawing a strict line between poetry and prose. The Oriental uses in ordinary language vivid and varied metaphors, such as we reserve for verse; the Eastern orator falls almost unconsciously into rhythm and melody; and the Hebrew prophet, when under the influence of the Divine spirit, is raised even above this level by the loftiness of his subject-matter and the afflatus which fills his soul. None the less, a line may be drawn which separates his most glowing and imaginative outpourings from poetry. The rapt utterances of an Isaiah are poetic in the highest degree, 'of imagination all compact,' but they are not poetry, and the Revisers in their introduction very properly distinguish between poetry and 'impassioned prose.' A different system of accents in the Hebrew marks the distinction as it was understood by the Massoretic scribes. For example, Hebrew poetry has its own vocabulary: many words found freely in the Psalms are never employed by prose writers. A poetic diction, too, is discernible in the retention of certain archaic forms of words and terminations in the declension of nouns and conjugations of verbs, together with a few grammatical peculiarities, not important enough to constitute anything like a special dialect, but discernible by the scholar, even in spite of the work of the Massorites, which tended to remove archaisms and make spelling and pointing uniform.

There is no rhyme, properly speaking, in Hebrew poetry, such as figures so largely in Arabic. Yet occasionally, as in Ps. cv, the ringing of changes upon certain suffixes gives the effect of an irregular rhyme. Perhaps this should be described rather as assonance, a device of which use is freely made both in poetry and rhetorical prose. A characteristic example is found in Isa. v. 7: 'He looked for judgement (*mishpāt*), but behold oppression (*mishpăch*); for righteousness (*tsedākāh*), but behold a cry (*tse'akah*).' This may be considered an example of Paronomasia, or play upon words, such as for the most part cannot be rendered into another language, but all Hebrew students know that this artifice is used in the Old Testament—as it is indeed in Shakespeare—in the loftiest and most impressive passages, without any thought of the lighter associations which in our minds belong to such verbal ingenuities.

But simple as is the form of Hebrew poetry, it is real and very effective. Its basis is the line, and from this we may proceed to the construction of the **verse**, thence to the **metre**, thence to the **strophe** or **stanza**: each being characterized by its own law of liberty, which is none the less a law because a considerable measure of freedom is permitted in its application. For example, there is no rule for the length of a line, yet it is certain that a limit is observed, marked by (1) sense, (2) grammatical construction, (3) ease of pronunciation in a single breath. It consists usually of from three to six words, representing at least double as many in English. In some Hebrew MSS. this distinction into lines is preserved, notably in the recently discovered fragments of the Hebrew original of Ecclesiasticus. In Goethe, Longfellow, and Whitman may be found examples of poems in which this division into lines without rhyme, strict metre, or uniform length is the chief characteristic of the versification. Whether any more exact rule for the number of feet or syllables to be found in each line is at all discoverable will be discussed directly. But at the outset it must be said that since it has been and still is a moot question whether there be such a law at all, it is quite clear that the scale by which lines were measured must form a very uncertain element in the construction of Hebrew verse.

It has been said that the line is the basis of each poem; it might perhaps be contended that the unit is to be found, not in the single line, but in the **distich** or **couplet**, consisting of two lines marked by parallelism of members. Bishop Lowth, in 1753, was the first among moderns to point out the importance of this principle as the essential feature of Hebrew poetry. He defines this parallelism as 'that relation and proportion of one verse to another which arises from the correspondence of terms and from the form of construction; from whence results a rhythmus of propositions and a harmony of sentences'; and in another place he describes it as such that in two or more members words correspond to words and matter to matter with a studied and measured equality. Where there are two such parallel members the verse exists in its simplest form :—

> A wise son maketh a glad father:
> But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.
>
> Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee:
> Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

It is obvious that so long as this parallelism is observed the relation between the two members may vary indefinitely. Lowth classified these relations by defining the parallelism as either (1) *synonymous*, in which the sense of each line is the same, emphasis being given by the double expression; or (2) *antithetic*, where the two members of the pair enforce a contrast, an artistic statement of one idea viewed from opposite sides; or (3) *constructive* or *synthetic*, which consists only in a similar construction, words not precisely answering to words, nor sentence to sentence as equivalent or opposite, but a correspondence being maintained in respect of the whole, by the addition of accessory ideas and modifications. It has been felt, however, that this classification is not altogether happy. The third class is not properly distinguished from the former two, so that the same example has been given by different writers under different heads. Then each of the former two classes bears almost indefinite subdivision, and the distinction between 'synonymous' and 'antithetic' is not deep and fundamental enough to form a basis. No classification which proceeds on these lines, even if Lowth's list were enlarged, would give an adequate idea of the almost endless diversity of relation between the members in form, structure, and significance. For example, no account is taken of the couplet which forms an expanded metaphor or emblem :—

> As cold waters to a thirsty soul,
> So is good news from a far country.

The legs of the lame hang loose,
So is a parable in the mouth of fools.

The couplet is the most frequent form of parallelism, but a **triplet** or tristich is occasionally found. An example may be taken from the New Testament, in Christ's words:—

Ask, and it shall be given you;
Seek, and ye shall find;
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

The **tetrastich,** consisting of four lines, may exhibit a correlation of two couplets, or three parallel lines may be followed by an independent one, or a steady progression may be discernible throughout the four:—

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
For thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head,
And Jehovah shall reward thee.

The connexion between the two pairs of lines is too close to resolve the tetrastich into independent couplets. An arrangement of five lines, of six, seven, eight, and even up to ten lines, has been traced by some writers, but into these further developments of the principle we need not enter. In the Psalms the principles by which the simpler elements are built up into a poem will become clear as we proceed.

Is **metre** discernible in Hebrew poetry? This has long been denied, as it has on the other hand been strenuously asserted by individual scholars, whilst of late the opinion has been steadily growing that the latter are right. Lowth, in a well-known passage of his preliminary dissertation to Isaiah, said that the harmony of the verses proceeds 'from some sort of rhythm, probably from some sort of metre, the laws of which are now altogether unknown and wholly undiscoverable.' Very various principles have been tried to account for the metrical phenomena, as Kepler tried all kinds of laws to account for the relation between the periodic times of the planets and their distance from the sun, but as yet without Kepler's success. Part of the difficulty may arise from modifications of the original which Massoretic pointing has introduced, or from corruptions in the text; and all kinds of liberties are taken with the received text by theorists anxious to establish a metrical hypothesis. Two schools are discernible among modern writers on this subject, according to whether accent alone is to be recognized, or whether all syllables are to be counted as having a place in the metrical scheme. Perhaps of these theories the former is the more probable, inasmuch as the early writing was without vowels and the lines are separated by the sense, and therefore an attempt to carry out a uniform principle of measurement by syllables would be exceedingly difficult. On the other hand, the predominance in every line of one tone-accent—with from time to time a secondary accent not interfering with the main stress—would be in accordance with what we know of primitive versification in other nations. Further discussion of the matter here would be out of place, inasmuch as no agreement among scholars has yet been reached. Some progress has, however, been made of late years, and there is no reason to despair of the attainment of some measure of success. The chief danger lies in an attempt to systematize with undue and pedantic precision. An appreciation of the poetry of the Psalms can hardly be said to be increased by a study of some of the metrical theories of recent years, which are little better than attempts to put Pegasus in harness, or to measure by a foot-rule the waves of the sea.

The line, with its predominating tone or accent; the verse, consisting as a rule of two lines, often of more; metre, occasionally discernible, but always irregular and for the most part irreducible to rule—so far the way is clear. The next question is, whether there be in Hebrew poetry, and especially in the Psalms, anything corresponding to the **strophe** in the Greek chorus, or the **stanza** in modern verse. In favour of this is to be said first, that in a fairly long poem such a break would be as natural, if not as necessary, as the end of a paragraph in a prose composition. As the length of a line is approximately determined by the number of words that can be pronounced in a breath, or that express a simple proposition, so the length of a stanza would be determined by the sufficient working-out of a given thought or theme. This is confirmed by the occurrence in certain Psalms of a refrain, marking the close of such a cluster of verses. Well-known examples are, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul?' in Pss. xlii and xliii; 'The Lord of hosts is with us' in Ps. xlvi; 'Turn us again, O Lord of hosts' in Ps. lxxx; and 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness' in Ps. cvii. It may be added—though the proof here is not one that can be far relied on—that the word 'Selah' is found for the most part at the end of what would correspond to a paragraph in prose and may be called a stanza in poetry. If no more be meant by the stanza or strophe than the natural subdivision of longer Psalms into portions of irregular length, sometimes clearly marked by a refrain, or by letters of the alphabet, or by 'Selah,' sometimes only generally discernible by the sense, but always giving a certain pause to the mind in reading and rest to the voice in reciting, there can be little question that such an Stanzaic arrangement is to be found in the Psalms, and should be as far as possible preserved. But as the attempt to press the real but irregular metre of the lines into definitely measured and regularly determined syllables has thus far failed, and probably would only spoil the Psalms if it succeeded, so the attempt to map out a Psalm into portions with lines of the same length corresponding to each other at intervals, and to introduce the technical Greek strophe in all its precision into Hebrew poetry, has failed and is, as we think, happily destined to fail, as often as it is renewed. In dealing with individual Psalms in these volumes, an attempt will be made to guide the reader in each case to such division of the verses into stanzas as may be easily and naturally made according to the sense, or which is distinctly indicated as intended by the Psalmist; it being always understood, however, that the use of the word 'stanza' does not imply any regular system of versification such as in modern poetry it would properly denote.

VI. VERSIONS AND USE IN THE CHURCH.

It remains to say something concerning the use made of the Psalms by translation into other languages, and especially their employment in the Christian Church.

The received text of the Hebrew, known as Massoretic—i. e. traditionally handed down and shaped by the professional scribes who prepared it in its present form—has been very carefully preserved by the Jews for more than a thousand years. It is impossible, however, to pursue research into the earliest history of the text, the very uniformity which the Jews have anxiously preserved for generations standing unfortunately in the way. The chief help to be obtained is from the early versions, which in some places preserve various readings which materially assist in the interpretation of obscure passages. In places the received text is almost certainly corrupt, but great care is necessary in emendation, since nothing is easier than to get rid of a difficulty by a modern conjecture, which has no more support than the opinion of scholars of the twentieth century that the Psalmist *may* have written words which their ingenuity has devised for him. The Greek translation known as the Septuagint (LXX) was made in the course of the third and second centuries B. C. It cannot be pronounced a good translation: it is often obviously faulty, often it appears to evade rather than to solve a difficulty, and in some places the rendering is quite unaccountable. But this last phenomenon may point to a difference of text, and in a number of instances it is quite clear that the LXX points to another, often to an easier and sometimes presumably to a better, text than the received Hebrew. The Targum—a later Aramaic paraphrase—at least shows what was the traditional Jewish opinion of the meaning of a Psalm some centuries after it was written. The Syriac Version, which often agrees with the Hebrew against the Greek, not seldom agrees with the Greek against the Hebrew, thus helping to guide us to the true text. The same may be said of Jerome's version of the Psalms into Latin, which was made directly from the Hebrew of his time, whilst the Vulgate was a rendering from the Greek. When the various early versions agree in a reading differing from the received text, and that in itself presents some grammatical irregularity or awkwardness of expression, the probabilities are that they represent an earlier and better text. The Revisers give the English reader some guidance in this matter by occasionally printing in their margin readings from the most important versions.

Later translations—who can count them? Who can enumerate even the languages into which these 'Praises' of the Most High God have been rendered? After the Gospels, the Book of Psalms has usually been one of the first to be rendered into the language of each country into which Christianity has penetrated, and at the present time the Psalter may be read in nearly two hundred languages and dialects. The standard translations now in use in English are that of the Prayer Book Version, the Authorized Version (1611), and the Revised Version (1884), the last of which is used in this volume. The so-called 'Prayer Book Version' was retained at the last revision of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662, because it was more familiar to the people than the recently made translation of 1611, and because it was 'smoother and more easy to sing.' It was, as is well known, made by Miles Coverdale, incor-

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porated into 'Matthew's Bible' in 1537 and the Great Bible (1540), and it has been retained in the Anglican Prayer Book ever since. It has endeared itself to generations, and helped to enrich the English language; and its literary and devotional value is not to be estimated by the degree of accuracy it exhibits in the rendering of the Hebrew.

For—not to speak of Luther in Germany, and Marot and Beza in France—it would require a small volume to give an account of the metrical versions of the Psalms that have appeared in the English language alone during the last three or four centuries. Soon after 1540 Thomas Sternhold, 'Grome of his Maiestie's robes,' was overheard by the young king Edward VI 'singing to his organ' such words as had never been heard in English before:—

O God, my Strength and Fortitude,
Of force I must love Thee;
Thou art my Castle and Defence
In my necessitie.

Before his death, in 1549, thirty-seven of his Psalms had been published with a dedication to the king; John Hopkins, a Suffolk clergyman, helped to make up a hundred Psalms; and by 1556 the whole hundred and fifty had been rendered into English metre—a version of which forty-seven editions were printed before 1600, 308 in the seventeenth century, and now specimens of more than 600 editions are preserved in the British Museum Library! Tate and Brady, the Scotch Version, the translations of separate Psalms by Milton, Watts, Wesley, Addison, and Keble, are all more or less familiar in this country, and these are named only to illustrate the hold which the Psalter in whole or in part has obtained in one Christian nation.

For the Christian Church throughout the centuries has testified to the inestimable value of the Psalms for public worship and private devotion. Christ and his disciples, as devout Jews, sang Psalms at that solemn Passover which was to be known through history as 'the Last Supper.' The Apostles James the Just and Paul the enthusiastic alike enjoin their early Christian followers to 'sing Psalms' and to 'teach and admonish one another in spiritual songs.' Tertullian describes the singing of Psalms at love-feasts, Ambrose organized and improved the use of psalmody in church worship, Athanasius enlarges on its value and importance, Chrysostom eloquently describes how Christians turned earthly night into heavenly day by the chanting of Psalms : 'When others are asleep, David alone is active!' For many centuries the Psalter was repeated at least once through in every week by ecclesiastical rule, and several canons mention a refusal to ordain such clerics as could not repeat the Psalms by heart. In later days, if the old mechanical repetition is not preserved, the Psalms have been probably not less loved, as they have assuredly been more carefully studied, more copiously annotated, and more accurately understood. As a stimulus to devotion for the languid, as a vehicle of praise and prayer for the godly, as music to the sad heart and wings for the joyous spirit, the Psalms have for thousands of years proved their inestimable worth and their inexhaustible resources. Appreciation of them has grown with the centuries, and every generation of devout souls finds them new. It is hoped that the pages which follow may do something to elucidate their meaning, especially for those who have little opportunity for study.

VII. LITERATURE.

The following selection includes only a few easily accessible English books, such as are likely to be most useful to those who desire to study the Psalter more closely.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK : *The Psalms.* (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.) Edition in one vol. The best in brief compass for all readers.

PEROWNE: *The Book of Psalms.* Larger edition in two vols., for Hebrew students; abridged in one vol.

MACLAREN: *Psalms.* (Expositor's Bible.) Three vols.

DRIVER: *Introduction to Literature of Old Testament*, pp. 359–391. Sixth edition. The best account of modern critical views.

CHEYNE: *The Origin of the Psalter.* (Bampton Lectures for 1889.) ROBERTSON: *Poetry and Religion of the Psalms.* (Croall Lectures for 1893.) These two books are representative, respectively, of advanced and conservative views on the subject.

Articles in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (W. R. SMITH), HASTINGS' *Dictionary of the Bible* (W. T. DAVISON), *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (W. R. SMITH and T. K. CHEYNE).

Excellent editions of the Psalter are

DRIVER: *The Parallel Psalter*, containing P.B.V. and one by the editor.

Cambridge Parallel Psalter, containing A.V., R.V., and P.B.V.

⁂ Other subjects of importance which belong to 'Introduction,' including 'The Spirit of Hebrew poetry,' 'The "I" of the Psalmist,' 'The Religious and Ethical Ideas of the Psalms,' 'The Messianic Hope,' and 'The Doctrine of a Future Life in the Psalter,' will be dealt with in the Introductory Chapter to vol. ii. of this work.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

I — LXXII

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

I—LXXII

BOOK I.

PSALM I. THE TWO WAYS.

THE first psalm forms an appropriate portal to the sanctuary of the Psalter. In all probability it was set in its present place by the editor of the first collection of 'Davidic' Psalms (see Introd. p. 7); less probably at the final redaction of the whole book. It stands without name of author, without title, without historical date-mark of any kind, and its very timelessness enhances the effect of the broad and strong contrast it draws between good and evil, light and darkness, life and death, the blessing and the curse which surely attach to the righteous and the wicked.

This introductory character was pointed out by Basil in the fourth century, but long before his time it had been obvious in the arrangement of the Psalter. In some MSS. the Psalm does not receive a number, but is treated as a prologue, and in others it is joined with the second Psalm. In the Talmud our first and second Psalms are said to form one *Parasha*: a mediaeval commentator draws attention to the fact that the first Psalm begins and ends with a beatitude (i. 1 and ii. 12); while in Acts xiii. 33, where Ps. ii. 7 is quoted, Codex Bezae and other authorities read 'in the first Psalm.' Such a blending can only have arisen from close juxtaposition and the absence of titles; there is no real connexion between the Psalms, which are widely separated in subject and probably in date.

The materials for fixing a date are few and doubtful. The only verbal parallels which help us are Joshua i. 8, where Joshua is bidden to 'meditate in the book of the law day and night,' and Jer. xvii. 5-8. In the former case the coincidence may have been accidental, though it seems to point to a similar date for the two passages. The parallel in the latter case is too close to have been accidental, one of the two writers must have been familiar with the words of the other. In such cases it is a delicate matter to assign priority, but the fact that Jeremiah's habit is to quote freely

1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And in his law doth he meditate day and night.

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from earlier literature, that the figure of the tree 'planted by the waters' is more fully developed in the prophecy, and that the companion picture of the man 'whose heart departeth from the Lord' is elaborated in detail, together with other less obvious signs, seems to point to an earlier date for the Psalm. The general parallel with Prov. x–xxiv may indicate the later pre-Exilic period as the most probable date, say the seventh century B.C.

The Psalm has a character of its own. Its gnomic and didactic strain is akin to some paragraphs in Proverbs. The simplicity of its declarations concerning the happiness of the righteous is not alloyed by any doubt or afterthought, but it would be a mistake to confine the promises of the Psalm to material prosperity.

1. 'Happy' (R. V. marg.). The Psalmist is not describing an inward state of joy or beatitude, but wishes rather to emphasize the visible reward which God gives to those who love and obey His commandments.

In the last clause read, 'sitteth in the company of scorners.' The three parallel clauses of the verse may or may not be intended to form a climax. They are usually so understood—walking, standing, sitting; counsel, way, company; wicked, sinners, scorners—the words seem to imply a progressively closer association with evil of a more pronounced kind. But the laws of parallelism do not require this. In each case the perfect tense of the verb used indicates a habit, but in English this is better described by the present 'walketh' than by the perfect 'hath walked.' What is meant is—the righteous man is one who habitually avoids (1) sharing in the thoughts and ideas of evil men, and still more (2) associating himself with the habits of those known to be offenders. Still less would he dream of (3) deliberately assembling with men who confederated to sneer at and attack religion.

2. These negative characteristics are explained by the fact that his whole heart is elsewhere. Delight in God, His will, and His word, is a safeguard which makes duty easy. The word translated **meditate** suggests in the Hebrew the low murmuring with which a man cons over to himself lines of verse which charm his imagination and his ear, or repeats in soliloquy a name that he loves.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, 3
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
The wicked are not so; 4
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgement, 5
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: 6
But the way of the wicked shall perish.

The **law** here is not to be understood of a definite collection of books, but the revelation of the Divine will, especially in the form of righteous precept.

3. Better, 'so shall he be like'; the freshness and fertility of spirit here described are a direct consequence of joy in the will of God. The **streams** spoken of may be either natural or artificial. Cf. Eccles. ii. 6, 'I made me pools of water, to water therefrom the forest where trees were reared.' Greenness of foliage and regularity and abundance of fruit are in Eastern countries specially dependent on irrigation; the roots must have access to running water. Read (marg.) 'in whatsoever he doeth he shall prosper,' or 'all that he doeth he maketh to prosper.' Both on grammatical grounds and for purposes of interpretation the person should be the subject of the verb.

4. The contrasting figure which describes the wicked also appeals more forcibly to an inhabitant of Palestine, who is familiar with the open threshing-floor on the hill-side, where winnowing is greatly helped by the wind which blows steadily in from the sea during the later hours of the day. As the corn is thrown up by the fan against the breeze, the light chaff is carried away, whilst the heavy grain descends to earth. The figure of 'stubble before the wind' is employed in Job xxi. 18, and often in the O. T. Compare John the Baptist's use of it in Matt. iii. 12.

5, 6. Metaphor is now dropped, and a sharp distinction is drawn between those whose **way**, or course in life, is 'known' by God, i. e. regarded with loving care and interest; and those whose conduct will not bear investigation in present or future judgement, who must be separated from the gathering of the righteous. Their 'way,' or life-work, must come to nothing, or come only to ruin, because it is essentially godless. In Job vi. 18 there is

2 Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples imagine a vain thing?

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a striking description of a caravan in the desert going up into the waste and perishing, because the streams on which they had depended for water had been dried up by the heat. Their track loses itself in sand, their bones bleach in the desert. Such ruin, says the Psalmist, must sooner or later overtake all who forsake God.

PSALM II. THE KINGDOM OF THE LORD'S ANOINTED.

The contrast between the first and second Psalms is marked. The former is as abstract and general in its contents as the latter is concrete and historical. The position is unmistakable. A king, who as 'God's anointed' represents the name and cause of Jehovah in the earth, is threatened by rebel princes who attempt to throw off his yoke. In sublime language, and with great dramatic power, they are rebuked for their folly and warned to submit in time to one against whom it is futile to revolt, inasmuch as the covenant of the Most High has secured his dominion and will punish all his foes.

But whilst the position is clear, the actual historical occasion cannot be defined. David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Alexander Jannaeus have in turn been suggested as the possible 'anointed king' of the text. But no revolt of subject-nations against David is recorded, and historically Solomon's is the most likely name. Some have regarded him as the author of the Psalm; others, with greater probability, consider that a poet in or after Solomon's time dramatically represented the situation. Other commentators, however, being unable to find an appropriate background in recorded history, view the Psalm as directly Messianic, and in any case it will be understood that the typical meaning of the words prevails over the historical, i. e. that though an historical occasion may have suggested the Psalm, its language and scope transcend the actual. A Messianic application of verses 1 and 2 is made by Peter in Acts iv. 25–27, who probably uses the word 'David' in much the same sense as our 'Psalmist.' The emphasis laid on the sonship of the king recalls the promises of 2 Sam. vii, but the loftiness of the language in parts suits the position of the ideal King, the Messiah, rather than any actual occupant of the throne. Compare the use made of verse 7 by Paul at Antioch, Acts xiii. 33, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews i. 5 and v. 5.

The Psalm divides naturally into four strophes, each consisting of three verses: 1–3, the projected rebellion; 4–6, Jehovah's son; 7–9, the authority of God's vicegerent; 10–12, warning to the

The kings of the earth set themselves, 2
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,
Let us break their bands asunder, 3
And cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: 4
The Lord shall have them in derision.
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, 5
And vex them in his sore displeasure:
Yet I have set my king 6
Upon my holy hill of Zion.

---

rebels to submit speedily. It has been said by a distinguished critic to exhibit 'the utmost art of Hebrew poetry' (Cheyne).

1. Read, 'Why do the nations tumultuously throng together?' The English word 'tumult'—compare the use of the same root in Ps. lxiv. 2, 'The tumultuous assemblage of evil-doers'—best suggests the meaning.

In the whole description the terseness of style gives a sense of vividness, whilst a change in the Hebrew tenses, impossible to render in English, indicates dramatic development, and the very sound of the rushing words is suggestive. The sudden outburst at the opening—**Why?** impresses upon the reader the utter 'vanity' of the attempted revolt far better than any laboured description.

2, 3. Read, 'The kings of the earth take their stand'; the verb in the latter clause has been rendered by Driver, 'sit in conclave' together. Secretly plotting, or openly rebelling, they oppose the true king. Jehovah's rule and that of His representative are one; a vain thing it must be to attempt to overthrow it; 'as hopeless as if the stars were to combine to abolish gravitation' (Maclaren).

4. From earth we turn to heaven. Read, 'He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh; the Lord mocketh at them.' A bold picture is presented by the Psalmist of *the* King surveying all in calm and indignant scorn, and afterwards we hear Him speak. The tenses in this verse should be rendered as presents.

5. Then—in due time, in His own time, when folly is ripe and the bubble ready to burst—'He will speak in wrath, and in his hot displeasure will confound them'; will smite them, that is, with bewildering panic.

6. An ellipsis occurs here of great dramatic force, 'But *I* have set,' with a double emphasis upon the 'I.' The drift of course is, How can you, how dare you rebel, when *I* have appointed

7 I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
8 Ask of me, and I will give *thee* the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
10 Now therefore be wise, O ye kings:
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

---

a monarch whose right it is to rule? Zion is used poetically for Jerusalem, and 'holy hill' is thought by many to indicate a comparatively late date in the history of the city.

7. A sudden change of speaker occurs, such as sounds abrupt to our ears, but is not uncommon in the writings both of psalmists and prophets. After Jehovah, His representative explains his position. We might insert an explanatory phrase, 'The king speaks,' before the words 'I will relate the decree,' &c. God's promise to him is viewed as a kind of edict, a Divine rescript having the force of law.

The anointing of Solomon is described as a solemn function with spiritual significance, 1 Kings i. 34. On that sacred day the promise of God to be a father to the king, and the duty of the king to be a true son of God, was especially dwelt upon; it was the birthday of the son. So in the N.T. the words are applied to Jesus Christ, the day in question being that of the Resurrection, Rom. i. 4; or in his superiority to angels, Heb. i. 5; or as appointed priest by God Himself, Heb. v. 5. The recognition of Christ's sonship in the Resurrection seems especially to have impressed Paul (Acts xiii. 33), and the parallel with the O.T. anointing commends itself.

8. The phrases of this verse must be understood hyperbolically if applied to a king of Israel: compare the promise to Abraham in Gen. xvii. 8. Canaan is to be 'an everlasting possession,' yet He gave him none inheritance in it. The words are true typically, and will receive a complete fulfilment before the end.

9. Read, 'a mace of iron,' as a warlike implement, or perhaps 'an iron sceptre,' as a symbol. For the 'shattering' of a potter's vessel see Jer. xix. 11; it 'cannot be made whole again.'

10. Another change of speaker: the Psalmist in his own person addresses rulers generally. Read, 'be admonished, ye judges of the earth.'

Serve the Lord with fear, 11
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, 12
For his wrath will soon be kindled.
Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. 3

Lord, how are mine adversaries increased! 1
Many are they that rise up against me.

---

11. Notice again the close identification of Jehovah with His vicegerent. To engage in warfare against this anointed king is to resist God Himself.

12. The margin of R. V. shows the difficulty of translation here. It is, however, safe to say that **Kiss the son** represents an almost impossible reading, the word for 'son' being not Hebrew but Aramaic. The versions point in another direction, and in all probability give us correctly the general meaning of the verse, even if we cannot be sure as to the correct reading in the Hebrew.

Render 'Do homage purely,' or 'Receive instruction, lest he be angry,' i. e. Jehovah, 'for his anger quickly burneth. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him.' If the phrase 'Kiss the son' be retained, 'kiss' must of course be understood as a mark of homage, see 1 Sam. x. 1.

The anger, however, is that of God Himself; spoken of elsewhere as 'the fire that burneth the forest, and as the flame that setteth the mountains on fire' (Ps. lxxxiii. 14, and compare Heb. x. 29). The adverb means may 'easily' be kindled, not in the sense of 'lightly,' as a passionate man blazes out on slight occasion; but because God is a jealous God and will not long brook wilful human opposition. On the other hand He is a genial friend, giving true happiness to those who take refuge under His strong protecting care.

Thus does a second beatitude bring to a gracious close a Psalm which opened with the mutterings of threatened war, and teaches to high and low upon the earth the only true secret of peace.

Psalm III. The Saint's Morning Hymn: Courage in God.

The first Psalm with a title. It may be noted that the word *Mizmor*, translated 'Psalm,' occurs only in the titles, as if it related to the music rather than the subject-matter.

This Psalm is attributed to David during his flight from Absalom.

2 Many there be which say of my soul,
There is no help for him in God. [Selah

The contents of the Psalm do not point specially to such an occasion, neither does it contain anything which would interfere with this account of authorship, except that the phrase 'his holy hill' as a description of Zion might be thought to be out of place so early. The writer is in great straits, his cause seems almost desperate, but his confidence in God is unshaken, and in the morning hour he gives thanks and prays. Many writers who do not freely accept Davidic Psalms are inclined to make an exception in the case of this and the next.

The full narrative of David's flight after Absalom's rebellion, probably referred to in the title, should be read, see 2 Sam. xv-xviii. The historian is unusually minute and graphic, and the song and the history may be made to illustrate one another. Compare e.g. the danger by night, 2 Sam. xvii. 1; the myriads of people, 2 Sam. xv. 13. It is impossible, though some have made the attempt, to specify precisely the morning in question, e.g. the morning after the night mentioned in 2 Sam. xvii. 16. But the Psalm apparently belongs to the earlier part of the rebellion, when its rapid success was striking fear into the hearts of David's friends.

A subdivision of the Psalm may naturally be made in accordance with the position of the 'Selah' thrice repeated. There will then be four stanzas: verses 1 and 2 express the need; verses 3 and 4 help in God; verses 5 and 6 describe David's confidence; verses 7 and 8 his prayer for fuller deliverance.

1. Render, 'Jehovah, how many are my foes become! many are rising up against me.' Compare 2 Sam. xv. 12, where it is said, 'the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.'

2. Render, 'Many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God.' The same word 'help' or 'salvation' should be employed both here and in verse 8, or the point of the connexion is lost. 'Salvation' implies safety or deliverance in the fullest sense; it must not be limited to bodily security, though neither must a purely or predominantly spiritual meaning be given to the word.

my soul is a stronger way of saying 'myself'; the shade of meaning depends upon the context. If we translate 'of my soul,' it is almost equivalent to 'life'; if with R. V. marg. 'to my soul,' the idea is 'to me, with a desire to wound my heart.' For the taunting language of this verse compare Shimei's curse in 2 Sam. xvi. 8 and David's silent submission, verse 10.

But thou, O Lord, art a shield about me; 3
My glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
I cry unto the Lord with my voice, 4
And he answereth me out of his holy hill. [Selah
I laid me down and slept; 5
I awaked; for the Lord sustaineth me.
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people, 6
That have set themselves against me round about.
Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God: 7
For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone;
Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked.

For **Selah,** as indicating a musical interlude, see Introduction, p. 14.

3. 'And yet *thou*,' strongly emphatic, as addressed to One who knows and is well known.

art a shield about me: as with Abraham, Gen. xv. 1, and compare Ps. xviii. 2. His kingly glory gone, covered with shame and reproach which he patiently bears and knows that to some extent he has deserved, David still possesses an inner sense of Divine favour. He knows that the God in whom he trusts can lift him out of the lowest depths of trouble and disgrace, see iv. 3. If God be his glory, his head will be lifted up ere long.

4. The tenses used here are imperfects, and the meaning is, 'As often as I cry, he answereth.' The 'holy hill' is not the temple-hill as such, but Zion, represented as the dwelling-place of God, see ii. 6.

5. The **I** is emphatic; even under these circumstances, 'I lay down and slept,' the tenses referring to historic fact. Or, 'I for my part was calm enough to lie down and sleep.' In either case a proof is afforded that God is the Psalmist's shield, protecting him in the darkness and unconsciousness of the night.

6. The 'myriads' of this verse indicates what the historian declares, that at the outset of the rebellion all Israel was against David. The language may be hyperbolical, but it could not appropriately be used, say, of a persecuted saint in post-Exilic times.

7. The call upon God to 'arise' is, of course, anthropomorphic. It was handed on as a watchword from wilderness days, when Israel started on a journey, led by the ark, 'Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered,' and is re-echoed in Ps. lxviii. 1.

8 Salvation belongeth unto the LORD:
Thy blessing be upon thy people. [Selah

4 For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments.
A Psalm of David.

1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness;
Thou hast set me at large *when I was* in distress:
Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

Thou hast broken the teeth may be a prophetic perfect = 'I am confident Thou wilt completely break the power of the wicked.'

8. For—though the enemy has said, There is no salvation for him in God—all salvation, all victory comes from Thee, and in due time Thou wilt grant it unto Thy servant. So David already triumphs; but, as a true king, prays for his people rather than himself: 'These sheep, what have they done?' The Psalm closes with a benediction, 'Upon thy people be thy blessing!'

PSALM IV. AN EVENING HYMN: REST IN GOD'S FAVOUR.

This Psalm is bound up with the preceding, a companion in every sense. It is written by the same author, contains similar characteristic phrases, and breathes the same spirit. Yet the difference is no less marked, as in two landscape pictures by the same artist. If David be the writer, the Psalm will be ascribed to the same historical period as the third, but some time afterwards. The sense of safety is more assured, and the environment more tranquil.

In structure the Psalm may be subdivided, like the last, into four stanzas of two verses each, or we may arrange thus: 1; 2–5; 6–8.

This is the first occasion on which we meet the phrase, **For the Chief Musician.** For a note upon it, see Introd. p. 14. It may be said here that the word thus translated is used in 1 Chron. xxiii. 4 and 28–32 and 2 Chron. ii. 1 for the overseer whose business it was to direct the service of the temple and the workmen. The general significance of the root (*lit.* 'to shine') is one of excellence or marked ability in any profession; here it seems to refer to the conductor of the temple-music or the leader of the orchestra. See the account of the choir-leaders given in 1 Chron. xv. 17–21.

1. God of my righteousness means, God who alone can vindicate my cause and establish my righteousness. We find a preparation here for the more spiritual meaning of N.T.

The figure of 'enlargement' for deliverance from trouble is common in the Psalms. As a man in a cave, in dense woods, or in

O ye sons of men, how long shall my glory be turned into 2
dishonour?
How long will ye love vanity, and seek after falsehood? [Selah
But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly 3
for himself:
The Lord will hear when I call unto him.
Stand in awe, and sin not: 4
Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be
still. [Selah
Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, 5

---

a narrow ravine, would feel 'cabined, cribbed, confined,' and long for scope and freedom, so the Psalmist is thankful to be 'set at large.' Render, 'when I was in straits: be gracious unto me,' &c. It is well to preserve the words 'grace' and 'gracious' for the root used here, implying as they do the free favour of God to the undeserving, rather than mercy towards the guilty.

2. My glory. There is no direct allusion here to God as in iii. 3. It is the personal and actual dishonour inflicted which is meant, though the adversaries are doing their utmost to prevent David from realizing his true glory in God. But there is an essential hollowness and falsity about the rebellion, which will ere long show itself.

3. set apart . . . for himself, always a mark of special distinction in the case of an Eastern sovereign; and God has His own ways of indicating His 'own possession.'

For the word **godly,** *chasid*, see detached note, p. 360. It is one of those words which requires a little history for its full explanation. In a sentence it may be said to denote one who is the object of the covenant-love of Jehovah, and who in his measure is faithful to the bond which it implies.

4. The rendering of R. V. marg., 'Be ye angry,' is from the LXX. It is used by Paul in Eph. iv. 26, with another kind of application. It does not well represent the meaning of the Hebrew root or the drift of the verse; we should render **Stand in awe,** and understand, 'Tremble with fear,' and so be preserved from offending. The second half of the verse must be interpreted in the same sense. It literally means 'Speak in your heart': or in modern phraseology, 'Let your own conscience speak in your quiet hours, and then you will **be still,**' that is, cease these frantic and futile efforts.

5. Render, 'Offer right sacrifices,' such as God will be well

And put your trust in the LORD.
6 Many there be that say, Who will shew us *any* good?
LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart,
More than *they have* when their corn and their wine are increased.
8 In peace will I both lay me down and sleep:
For thou, LORD, alone makest me dwell in safety.

5 For the Chief Musician; with the Nehiloth.
A Psalm of David.

1 Give ear to my words, O LORD,
Consider my meditation.

---

pleased with. The same phrase is used in Deut. xxxiii. 19, which forms a closer parallel than the reference to li. 19, where penitence is emphasized. The advice is to set themselves in right line and order, else all their sacrifices, like those of Saul in the case of Amalek, will only increase their condemnation.

6. It is easy to complain and to take gloomy views of the future. Absalom had tried to persuade the people that, if he were king, justice would indeed be done, 2 Sam. xv. 4. David points to the true source of light and happiness, using a phrase from the priestly benediction, Num. vi. 26. Whilst men are pessimistically crying, 'Will the good time never come?' the righteous are content to pray, 'Lord, lift the light of Thy countenance upon us.'

7. True joy may be found in time of straits, far more blessed than the reckless roystering of the ungodly, or the innocent enjoyment of God's good gifts of corn and wine.

8. The Psalmist would say, As formerly I was calm enough to sleep in the midst of danger, so now I will lay me down in peace and 'sleep at once,' the word indicating that the lying down and the sleeping come 'together,' no interval of watchfulness is caused by anxiety.

There is some doubt as to the meaning of **alone**, as the rendering of R. V. marg. 'in solitude' shows. The question is whether the word refers to God, 'Thou alone workest great marvels'; or to David, 'Thou makest me to dwell alone, apart from my foes and in perfect safety.' Either gives good sense, the latter probably is the meaning; compare Deut. xxxiii. 28.

PSALM V. A MORNING PRAYER BEFORE GOING TO THE SANCTUARY.

The title assigns this Psalm to David, and some commentators still accept his authorship. The chief objection is the use of the

Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God : 2
For unto thee do I pray.
O Lord, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice ; 3
In the morning will I order *my prayer* unto thee, and will
keep watch.

---

word translated 'temple' in verse 7. The phrase 'house of God' presents no difficulty, but the word *heykāl*, which means properly 'palace' and is probably to be so understood in Amos viii. 3, seems quite inapplicable to the tent in which David had lodged the ark. The word is used, however, of Heaven, as the dwelling-place of God in Ps. xxix. 9, and it is applied to the sanctuary at Shiloh, 1 Sam. i. 9, as a kind of earthly counterpart to the heavenly abode. It might therefore be employed poetically as a synonym for the house of God, see xxvii. 4, 6. But it is to be said further, that the tone of the righteous man's complaint against evil-doers in verse 10 is hardly applicable to David, even in the time of Saul's persecution or Absalom's rebellion, while it is quite inconsistent with the position of a king on the throne. Rather does it apply to a later period when the pious and the ungodly Jews were sharply distinguished, as in the time of Jeremiah or the later Monarchy.

There appear to be three sections in the Psalm : Introduction, verses 1–3 ; God the ground of confidence, 4–7 ; Prayers for self, for enemies, for friends, 8–12.

The title indicates that the Psalm is to be set to music and sung to an accompaniment of wind instruments.

1. The word translated **meditation** implies an unspoken or, more probably, a lowly murmured petition. Thus did Hannah speak 'in her heart' ; her lips moved, but her voice was not heard, and Eli thought her intoxicated, 1 Sam. i. 13.

2. The word **cry** presents a strong contrast. We are accustomed to read the word in the Psalms as equivalent to 'call,' but it should be understood of a literal cry, strong and piercing. Both words point to strong emotion, very differently expressed.

3. The phrase **in the morning** stands in an emphatic position, and is twice repeated. It is to be understood literally ; the Psalm is a preparation for a new day, and is as the offering of a morning sacrifice.

This is more fully brought out by the phraseology of the verse. The word **order,** equivalent to 'arrange,' is used of (1) a sacrifice, Gen. xxii. 9, 'laid the wood in order,' and (2) a cause or argument, Job xxxii. 14, 'order words against me.'

To **keep watch** has been understood of the priest, who after arranging the sacrifice would look up to God for a favourable answer. Also as of a sentinel in 2 Sam. xviii. 24 and Hab. ii. 1,

4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness:
Evil shall not sojourn with thee.
5 The arrogant shall not stand in thy sight:
Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak lies:
The LORD abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.
7 But as for me, in the multitude of thy lovingkindness will
I come into thy house:
In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.
8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine
enemies;

'I would set forth my cause or plea and watch for an answer.' The associations of the phrase are not decisive, but (1) is perhaps the more probable interpretation.

4. In the second half of the verse render as R. V. marg., 'The evil man cannot be guest of thine.' The idea is more fully brought out in Ps. xv and xxiv, see notes.

5, 6. Various kinds of evil are enumerated. For the first word, 'Fools' (R. V. marg.) is not strong enough, while **arrogant** is somewhat too strong. It means 'boasters,' loud, noisy, and obstreperous, rather than haughty, reserved, and arrogant; the element of folly must be included. **Stand in thy sight** is not the same thing as 'standing in the congregation,' i. 5; it means 'shall not lift up their heads in thy court,' or even venture into the presence of God. The light of that august presence-chamber is too keen and strong for such to encounter. A general word for evil-doers follows, with two kinds of wrong specified, violence and fraud. Equally detestable ('abhor' in verse 6 is a strong word for loathing) are the bold self-assertion of evil which strives to crush the good and the subtle craft which insidiously winds its way into power.

7. Strongly contrasted is the attitude of the Psalmist. *He* draws near to God, and the qualifications which make this possible are (1) the grace and lovingkindness of God which permit the approach; (2) his own reverent love of righteousness which prepares him rightly to approach the place where God dwells.

8. The theme of his prayer is that God will enable him to order his life aright in the presence of so many who neither fear God nor regard man. Read with R. V. marg., 'them that lie in wait for me'; the word is probably to be understood as of a beast of prey, a stronger power watching for a good opportunity of striking a blow.

Make thy way plain before my face.
For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; 9
Their inward part is very wickedness:
Their throat is an open sepulchre;
They flatter with their tongue.
Hold them guilty, O God; 10
Let them fall by their own counsels:
Thrust them out in the multitude of their transgressions;
For they have rebelled against thee.
But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice, 11
Let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them:
Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.
For thou wilt bless the righteous; 12
O Lord, thou wilt compass him with favour as with a shield.

Make thy way (i. e. the way of righteousness) **plain**: not clear or evident, but level, straight, easy to travel.

9. There is no 'steadfastness,' consistency, in their utterances, nothing that one can trust to. The reason is that there is hollowness within; *lit.* 'destructions,' the plural indicating completeness; marg. 'a yawning gulf.' **Throat** and **tongue** stand for the way in which speech is used, flattering in tone, destructive if listened to. Thus did Christ denounce the Pharisees as whited sepulchres.

10. If God holds or declares them guilty, punishment is sure to follow. The persons in question occupy a position of authority, from which the Psalmist asks that they may be 'thrust down.' However powerful they may be on earth, they are rebels against God.

11, 12. Render, 'So shall all those that take refuge in thee rejoice, They shall,' &c. The meaning is, this is the only way for the land to prosper; when the evil are overthrown, the true-hearted will be happy and successful. The Psalmist and the righteous portion of the community identify themselves with God's kingdom in the world, and desire that His true citizens shall come to their own.

love thy name means delight in thy revealed character and desire, in the sense of the Lord's Prayer, that everywhere it should be known and hallowed.

In the last verse render, 'with favour, as with a buckler, thou dost encompass him.' Five words are used in the O. T. for 'shield,' two chiefly. The smaller, *magēn*, might be carried on the arm;

6 For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments, set to the Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger,
Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

---

the larger, *tsinnah*, which was large enough to be carried in front of a warrior by an attendant, is referred to here. See 1 Sam. xvii. 7 (41 ?).

PSALM VI. A SUFFERER'S 'MISERERE.'

A Psalm written in sore trouble. That the sorrow is personal rather than national—as a current fashion would make it—seems clear; also that severe bodily sickness is its main element. The enemies whom the righteous man so often encounters in an evil world have contributed to the Psalmist's distress, but they stand in the background rather than in the foreground of the picture. He is still in danger of death, and in the former part of the Psalm calls for deliverance; but before it closes he sees light dawn, and anticipates the time when the malice of those who add to his pain by declaring it to be a visitation from God for his sins will be utterly disappointed, and their taunts recoil on themselves to their shame and overthrow (verse 10).

The Psalm, in common with nearly all in the first Book, is assigned to David in the title. There is no period in David's life known to us to which it would be specially appropriate, nor is there anything in the language to enable us to fix date or author. Many parallel expressions are found in other Psalms and in the Book of Jeremiah, and it might well have proceeded from Jeremiah or a Job-like sufferer of his time. It has been used in the Church for centuries as the first of the Penitential Psalms; and though it contains no expression of repentance for sin, the Psalm may be fitly employed by the godly who pray for help in time of trouble.

Different arrangements of the contents have been adopted, making two, three, or four subdivisions respectively. The simplest is 1–7, earnest prayer; 8–10, anticipated triumph. The outburst in verse 8 is abrupt, but such sudden changes are not infrequent in the Psalter.

The title indicates the use of stringed instruments for accompaniment, apparently with double-bass viol. See Introd. p. 15.

1. A distinction is here recognized between two rods, one of fatherly chastisement in love, the other of severe punishment as an expression of Divine wrath. This distinction is marked in Jer. x. 24, 'Correct me, but with judgement; not in anger'; and in xlvi. 28, 'I will not make a full end, but correct thee in measure,' or 'I will correct thee with judgement, but can in no wise leave thee wholly unpunished.' The language of the Psalm seems to

Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am withered away: 2
O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.
My soul also is sore vexed: 3
And thou, O LORD, how long?
Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: 4
Save me for thy lovingkindness' sake.
For in death there is no remembrance of thee: 5
In Sheol who shall give thee thanks?
I am weary with my groaning; 6
Every night make I my bed to swim;
I water my couch with my tears.

---

have been earlier than Jeremiah, and may have suggested the thought to him. The significance of bodily punishment as reformatory chastisement is familiar in the O. T., but the Psalmist pleads that his pain goes beyond this.

2. Render, 'Be gracious unto me, for I languish.' The last word is used in Nah. i. 4 of Bashan and Lebanon as withering in a hot wind.

my bones: that is, the very framework of his body is racked by pain and shaken by exhausting disease.

3. Mind and body are closely connected, but in this case pain of mind is an effect, not a cause.

how long? is a plaintive plea which speaks for itself. It was frequently used by Calvin, a great bodily sufferer, and it is urged by the souls 'under the altar' in Rev. vi. 10. If trial is necessary, may it not end soon?

4, 5. The danger of death is not fully past, and the Psalmist pleads that for the sake of God's own lovingkindness he may not pass from the state of 'the living who praise thee' (Isa. xxxviii. 19) into that shadowy region where God can neither be remembered nor adored. It is useless to try to explain away the language of this and other similar passages. The prayer of Hezekiah in his sickness is closely parallel, and though in both cases the utterance is that of a dark mood, it is such as the pious would never have indulged in had the clear light of revelation illumined the future.

The Hebrew word **Sheol** is retained in R. V.—an awkward necessity. It is not, nor is likely to be, naturalized in English, yet we need a word corresponding to the Greek Hades to describe the shadowy state of the departed spirit, which was all that the Jew, except in rare moments of triumphant faith, had to anticipate when this life was over.

6, 7. The Psalmist is still in pain, and weak, passing sleepless

7 Mine eye wasteth away because of grief;
It waxeth old because of all mine adversaries.
8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;
For the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.
9 The LORD hath heard my supplication;
The LORD will receive my prayer.
10 All mine enemies shall be ashamed and sore vexed:
They shall turn back, they shall be ashamed suddenly.

7 Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush a Benjamite.

1 O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust:
Save me from all them that pursue me, and deliver me:

---

and weary nights. His hollow eyes and wasted cheeks tell of the severity of the disease which has sapped his strength. The reproaches of scornful foes have told upon him and helped to 'age' him.

8–10. But the very mention of these rouses him to sudden energy. Light dawns from above, and already he anticipates the answer to his prayer. Faith speaks both in the past and the future tenses, **hath heard** and **will receive**; the former is a prophetic perfect, for in some way a Divine manifestation has been granted to comfort him. Hence he anticipates that complete reversal of human judgements and transference of his own shame and dismay to his adversaries, which will come about when his full recovery to health is accomplished.

PSALM VII. AN APPEAL TO THE JUDGE OF ALL.

The title of this Psalm describes it as **Shiggaion,** a dithyrambic song of irregular structure and of impassioned character. It is attributed to David under circumstances which extant history does not enable us to identify. 'Cush the Benjamite' is not otherwise known to us, but he may well have been a partisan of the Benjamite Saul. Attempts made to identify him with Shimei, see 2 Sam. xviii. 21, or with an 'Ethiopian,' or with Saul himself, are obviously the resorts of ignorance. The framer of the title possessed another, and it may be an earlier or fuller tradition concerning David's history, than that recorded in the canonical books.

There is no good reason for questioning this tradition. The language of the Psalm is vigorous, and appropriate to David when persecuted by Saul. Modern commentators object that the

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WELL IN THE DESERT

Lest he tear my soul like a lion, 2
Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.
O LORD my God, if I have done this; 3
If there be iniquity in my hands;
If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; 4
(Yea, I have delivered him that without cause was mine
  adversary:)
Let the enemy pursue my soul, and overtake it; 5

---

mention of 'peoples' in verses 8 and 9, and of God as judge of the nations, points to a much later date than David's, but this is surely arbitrary. The chapters in 1 Sam. which describe David's life during his persecution by Saul present many interesting parallels with the language of the Psalm (compare 1 Sam. xxiv. 12, 18 with verses 3, 4), and no student of Hebrew literature can ignore that prophetic element which enables the writers of the Psalms and others to pass beyond the immediate circumstances of their own time and discern the principles of Divine government in the earth.

The Psalm has been variously divided, but seems to fall naturally into three parts: 1-5, a complaint; 6-10, an urgent plea; 11-17, confident expectation of judgement.

1, 2. Render, 'In thee, Jehovah my God, have I taken refuge.' Of several words used in the Psalms for 'trust,' it is well to preserve by this rendering the distinctiveness of the root used here.

There is nothing inconsistent between the mention of David's enemy as one, or as many. Whether Saul's rage be intended, or some directly personal insult on the part of one of his followers, it would be natural to cry out against all, while emphasizing the rage of one.

3, 4. A protestation of innocence on the part of the Psalmist. The word translated **iniquity** includes a perversion of right in two forms, set forth in the two clauses of verse 4. The more serious would be a wanton outrage on the peaceably disposed; the lesser would be a requital of evil to one who had wantonly attacked him. Both A. V. and R. V. read the latter clause as a parenthesis, but an alternative, simpler and on the whole preferable, would be to read:—

'If I have wrought evil upon him that was at peace with me,
Or despoiled him that without cause was mine adversary.'

Either rendering is appropriate in David's mouth in relation to Saul, as 1 Sam. xxiv and xxvi sufficiently show.

Yea, let him tread my life down to the earth,
And lay my glory in the dust. [Selah
6 Arise, O Lord, in thine anger,
Lift up thyself against the rage of mine adversaries:
And awake for me; thou hast commanded judgement.
7 And let the congregation of the peoples compass thee about:
And over them return thou on high.
8 The Lord ministereth judgement to the peoples:
Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and to mine integrity that is in me.
9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the righteous:

---

5. The word **glory** here is used as synonymous with 'soul' and 'life,' but the meaning is not precisely the same. There is a climax in the three clauses—let them take my life with violence, and even bring shame upon my name and memory.

6. An appeal to God as if He needed to be aroused, that He would manifest that righteousness which the Psalmist knows to be characteristic of His government. Render, 'Awake for me, thou that hast commanded judgement,' that is, ordained it for others and art Thyself its source and fount.

7. The Psalmist desires that God would hold a great assize, as in Psalm l and Joel iii, that the righteous Judge of all would assume and exercise His functions. So far the meaning is clear, but the phraseology is not quite so clear. It may mean (1) Gather the nations together and return to heaven as the judgement-seat before whose bar they will be called; or (2) Judge on earth and return to heaven when the work is over; or (3) Resume the functions which it might appear have been for a while left in abeyance; or (4), with an alteration of the pointing, 'Take thy seat on high.' Of these either the first or the last is the best, according to whether the Massoretic pointing be preserved or not.

8. Judgement has begun: Jehovah is administering it: may the Psalmist be vindicated! He claims not to be free from all fault, but to be a man of integrity, guiltless of the treachery towards man with which he has been charged, and having his heart 'right with God'; see verse 10.

For the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.
My shield is with God, 10
Which saveth the upright in heart.
God is a righteous judge, 11
Yea, a God that hath indignation every day.
If a man turn not, he will whet his sword; 12
He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; 13
He maketh his arrows fiery *shafts*.
Behold, he travaileth with iniquity; 14
Yea, he hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.
He hath made a pit, and digged it, 15
And is fallen into the ditch which he made.

9, 10. hearts and reins. In the O. T., and generally throughout the Bible, the heart is the centre of personal life and the reins are the seat of the emotions.

11. The Psalmist has been crying for justice, that God would set up His tribunal and declare sentence. But this must not be misunderstood. This verse shows that he knows well that God is always sitting as righteous Judge, that His wrath arises against the evil which day by day is being committed, and that punishment will surely come.

12, 13. The preparation for such punishment is here described. But weapons of war, sharp **sword** and **fiery arrows,** are named, rather than the cord and dungeon of a criminal court. These words are often used to describe the vengeance which the wicked inflict upon the righteous, and the text says that with their own scourge they shall be smitten. The secrecy and suddenness with which arrows strike make them fit symbols of Divine judgements, and His lightnings are the fire-darts which consume wherever they fall.

14. The figures of speech—conceive, travail, bring forth—which represent the birth and growth of sin, are not infrequent in the Bible; see especially Jas. i. 15. A sorry process of generation this, of which the end is at best nothingness. More usually the dire and unhallowed progeny proves full of mischief for the parent himself and for all besides. Compare Milton's terrible picture of Death as the offspring of Sin and Satan in *Paradise Lost*, Book ii.

15. Render the second clause, 'And falleth into the ditch which

16 His mischief shall return upon his own head,
And his violence shall come down upon his own pate.
17 I will give thanks unto the LORD according to his righteousness:
And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

8 For the Chief Musician; set to the Gittith. A Psalm of David.

1 O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!
Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens.

---

he was making.' The tense brings out the fact that even while digging deeply and with care, he is buried in his own trench, caught in his own trap.

16. A third figure, to set forth the same truth. The wicked man is 'hoist with his own petard,' holden with the cords of his own sins, Prov. v. 22; or, as in this verse, the stone which he has thrown at others recoils on his own head.

17. The storm settles into calm. The Psalmist returns to the strain of the first verse; but instead of the trust with which he had committed his cause to God, we find a note of praise to Him who has virtually answered his prayer. For a detached note on *El 'Elyon*, a name of 'God Most High,' used chiefly in poetry, see p. 359.

PSALM VIII. THE GLORY OF GOD SEEN IN THE TRUE DIGNITY OF MAN.

The subject of this Psalm is not, as is often represented, the glory of God in nature, nor the glory of man, nor the glory of the Messiah as such, but the glory of God reflected in the fact that He has made a creature in many respects so insignificant and puny as man, lord of creation around, because he is vicegerent of God upon the earth. The glory of the heavens is doubtless noted in passing, the glories of the earthly creation also, and of man to whom the dominion of earth is given; yet is he but a babe, ignorant and frail, a mere speck in the presence of the vast universe as seen in the nightly sky. Precisely at this point the glory of God appears, who has given to such an infant of days such dignity and capacity; God has been mindful of him, and given him a place in the universal order little less than Divine.

Modern astronomy has in no way weakened the lessons of this Psalm. It has rather deepened and intensified them, while biology and psychology and modern science as a whole have added to their

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou 2
established strength,
Because of thine adversaries,

---

meaning on the human side. With the religious aspects of these truths physical science is not concerned, but the Psalmist has touched bed-rock in the relations between nature and man and God, which no changes in the extent of our knowledge has disturbed, or can disturb.

The Psalm is quoted in Heb. ii. 6, where the original meaning of verses 4–6 is brought out and raised to a higher level. Man, says the writer of the Epistle, has not yet fulfilled his high functions or realized his true glory. We see not yet this lordship of his attained, but in and through the Incarnation we see in One who took on him our nature and in it submitted to death, crowned with glory and honour, the pledge and earnest of the fulfilment of all the high promise of this Psalm, and much more besides.

The title attributes the Psalm to David. Certainly it was written before Job vii. 17 and Ps. cxliv. 4, which make use of its language in very different ways. If written by David—and there is no good reason to the contrary—it is not probable that it was written during his shepherd-days, but rather as the late result of earlier meditations under the stars.

For the phrase 'On the Gittith' see Introd. p. 15. It has been understood to mean (1) accompanied by an instrument named from Gath; (2) to a tune of Gath; (3) a march of the Gittite guard; (4) to be sung to the tune of a vintage-hymn. The first and the last suppositions appear the most likely.

1. Render,

'Jehovah, our Lord, how glorious is thy name in all the earth!
Thou whose majesty reacheth above the heavens.'

Yahweh is here the covenant name of God, the title 'our Lord' being added to indicate Israel's close relationship as a community to Him. The Hebrew of the second clause it is almost impossible to translate as now pointed. The renderings of A. V. and R. V. imply a different text. The translation given above is based on a slightly changed vocalization.

2. 'Ordained strength,' or 'established a stronghold,' but the latter implies somewhat too bold a figure. The LXX reads 'perfected praise,' and is so quoted in Matt. xxi. 16. The phrase does not refer to those who are children in age, though the application of the words made in the N. T. is natural and beautiful. Childhood does furnish its own witness to God. The thought of the verse, however, is that God establishes His own glory by means of man, who is but as a babe in the universe.

That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
5 For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honour.
6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
7 All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

Render, 'To still the enemy and the vengeful.' The nobler word **avenger** is not in place here. Does this point to non-Israelitic foes? The question cannot be definitely answered, but it is better to understand the phrase quite generally of all who oppose God.

3, 4. This passage implies a night scene, as Ps. xix sets forth the splendours of the sunshine and the day. Render, 'What is frail man?' The word *Enosh* denotes man in his weakness, while the parallel expression **son of man** describes the race of man generally as man upon the earth. The word **visit** is sometimes applied to judgement, Ps. lix. 5; Exod. xxxii. 34: sometimes to a coming of God in mercy, Jer. xxix. 10; Luke vii. 16. Here it clearly means 'remember and care for.' Cheyne says, 'Visitation is the Hebrew equivalent for special providence.'

The bitter turn given to these words in Job vii. 17 shows that when that chapter was written the phrase must have been some time known and familiar.

5, 6. Render, 'For thou hast made him little less than Divine.' The LXX Version refers *Elohim* to the angels, and is followed in Heb. ii. 6. But most interpreters translate as R. V., and the distinct reference to Gen. i. 26 throughout the context confirms this.

7, 8. Render, 'Sheep and oxen, all of them.' The creatures are enumerated by kinds as in Gen. i. 21, but only as representing all creation. If modern science has emphasized man's physical kinship with the higher animals, it has indefinitely widened and

O LORD, our Lord, 9
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!

For the Chief Musician; set to Muth-labben. A Psalm of David. 9

I will give thanks unto the LORD with my whole heart; 1
I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

---

deepened the gulf between the two in other respects. Man's 'natural' sovereignty was never so clear as to-day.

9. The last verse strikes again the same note as the first. But, as one may say, it sounds an octave higher, after the intervening melody—the thesis is reiterated with emphasis after the proof and illustration given. It would be well if the first and last verses of the Psalm were printed apart from the rest, as a double utterance of its great theme.

PSALM IX. THANKSGIVING FOR THE OVERTHROW OF ENEMIES.

The relation between Pss. ix and x is said to present 'an unsolved literary problem.' The two are closely connected, but amongst many theories as to the history of this connexion two may be said to divide the field. The two Psalms may have originally formed one whole, as they do now in the LXX and other versions, or Ps. x may form a later addition to a much earlier composition. Together they form an acrostic, very irregularly constructed. In Ps. ix are the rudiments of an alphabetic arrangement. In verse 1 each of the four lines begins with *Aleph*, then the verses are arranged in pairs, the pairs beginning with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet successively, but the *Daleth* section is missing. In verse 6 the *He* cannot be traced according to the present text (a slight change of reading would, however, remedy this), and verse 18 begins with *Koph* instead of *Caph*. In x. 1 the alphabetic arrangement is taken up again, but dropped till verse 12 is reached, when the pairs begin with the last four letters of the alphabet.

There is considerable resemblance in the phraseology of the two Psalms, but the whole situation in the two cases appears to be different, and it seems better to regard Ps. x as a later Psalm composed as an appendix, or a continuation of the earlier under different conditions, rather than as part of a Psalm which from the beginning was one whole. Delitzsch says, 'If we read Ps. ix along with Ps. x, *uno tenore*, the latter becomes a tail which disfigures it.'

If this view is correct, Ps. ix might be Davidic, as it presents many points of contact with Ps. vii, while Ps. x would date from the later Monarchy, or after the Exile. Or x. 3-11 may have been

2 I will be glad and exult in thee:
I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High.
3 When mine enemies turn back,
They stumble and perish at thy presence.
4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause;
Thou satest in the throne judging righteously.
5 Thou hast rebuked the nations, thou hast destroyed the wicked,

---

worked in from another Psalm, as this section breaks the structure and presents characteristics of its own. The similarity of language in Pss. ix and x is thought by some to be so striking—'harsh, obscure and lapidarically terse,' Delitzsch calls it—that they consider the two must be ascribed to one author, though not originally forming one Psalm.

There is no distinctly traceable connexion of thought between the pairs of verses in Ps. ix, but it is distinctly national, as Ps. x is strongly personal, and the former as clearly gives thanks for victories already achieved, closing with confident anticipation of further triumph, as the latter complains of the predominance of evil in one community.

The title, **set to Muth-labben,** must be understood as the name of a melody, 'Death to the son.' It is useless to conjecture its meaning further. It may be that the text is corrupt, as the versions appear to follow another reading.

1, 2. An outburst of praise inspired by a victory apparently recent. Divine intervention on behalf of Israel is often described as 'a marvellous work.' The line between the natural and the supernatural was not very closely defined for the pious Jew, who could trace the hand of God alike in the rising of a storm, the outbreak of a pestilence, or the dissension of enemies among themselves leading to their defeat; and would number all these among the 'wonderful doings' of the Most High. Compare lxxviii. 12, xcviii. 1.

3, 4. Join these verses closely with the former and render, 'Because mine enemies turn back, They stumble and perish at thy presence.' The defeat is fresh in recollection, and is marked by three stages—retreat, stumbling, fall and final overthrow. But all is traced to the action of God, who is represented as occupying the seat of judgement, and giving sentence in favour of Israel and against their enemies by giving the victory to the former.

5, 6. A striking description of complete overthrow. The

Thou hast blotted out their name for ever and ever.
The enemy are come to an end, they are desolate for ever; 6
And the cities which thou hast overthrown,
Their very memorial is perished.
But the LORD sitteth *as king* for ever: 7
He hath prepared his throne for judgement.
And he shall judge the world in righteousness, 8
He shall minister judgement to the peoples in uprightness.
The LORD also will be a high tower for the oppressed, 9
A high tower in times of trouble;
And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; 10
For thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.
Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: 11
Declare among the people his doings.
For he that maketh inquisition for blood remembereth them: 12

---

enemy appear to be nations around, who fear not God. The cities are described as 'perpetual ruins.' The Hebrew word for 'destroy' means 'uproot,' the destruction is 'radical' and—always a striking feature in the East, where traditions are so long and carefully preserved—'the very remembrance of them is perished.'

7, 8. The Psalmist passes from thinking of the past to confidence in the future, especially dwelling on the thought of God as king of the whole earth. Note R. V. **peoples;** A. V. renders 'people,' which is misleading as regards a cardinal feature of the Psalm. The nations of the whole habitable earth belong to God, and their affairs shall be administered by Him in equity.

9, 10. Hence will be realized what appears to the Oriental, unaccustomed to equitable rule, as a description of a 'millennium,' that the oppressed shall always find a helper, a stronghold against the prevalent oppressor. The defence which the knight's castle or the walled town furnished in the Middle Ages against lawless bands of spoilers, the name of God shall be, as a **high tower** whereinto one may run and be safe.

11, 12. Praise is in these verses rendered to God because He remembers the **poor** or 'meek' (R. V. marg.) or 'humble,' who cannot defend themselves. There is One who 'requireth blood,' so the phrase should be rendered, as in Gen. ix. 5, 'Whoso sheddeth

He forgetteth not the cry of the poor.
13 Have mercy upon me, O Lord;
Behold my affliction *which I suffer* of them that hate me,
Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death;
14 That I may shew forth all thy praise:
In the gates of the daughter of Zion,
I will rejoice in thy salvation.
15 The nations are sunk down in the pit that they made:
In the net which they hid is their own foot taken.
16 The Lord hath made himself known, he hath executed judgement:
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. [Higgaion. Selah
17 The wicked shall return to Sheol,

---

man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' Though this be rude justice, it represents a standard of retribution higher than in many ages and countries has proved attainable. The text hesitates between two words in verse 12, 'poor' and 'meek.' In the Hebrew these two are closely akin in root and meaning, and often confused with one another; the reference here is apparently to the 'afflicted,' those bowed down under the oppressor.

13, 14. Some critics are disposed to advocate a change of tenses in verse 13: 'God hath been gracious: Thou hast lifted me up.' But the blending of praise and prayer is common in the Psalms; Delitzsch supposes this to be a prayer before battle. The victory already gained may not have been so complete as to preclude the necessity for prayer that God would carry on His work of deliverance. The Psalmist asks that, having been delivered from imminent death, he may show forth all God's praise **in the gates of the daughter of Zion,** i. e. publicly, in the place of concourse—market-place or town-square, as moderns would say—amongst the citizens of the victorious capital.

15, 16. The Psalmist encourages himself by the manifestation of Divine righteousness which has taken place before his eyes, and so prepares the way for the confident expectation expressed in the next stanza, 17 and 18.

Higgaion and **Selah** are musical notes, probably indicating a solemn and a triumphant interlude respectively. See Introd. p. 15.

17, 18. 'Turned into hell' (A. V.) gives an entire misconception of the Psalmist's meaning. **Return to Sheol** simply means 'be overthrown and die.' The strict meaning of 'return' should not

Even all the nations that forget God.
For the needy shall not alway be forgotten, 18
Nor the expectation of the poor perish for ever.
Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: 19
Let the nations be judged in thy sight.
Put them in fear, O LORD: 20
Let the nations know themselves to be but men. [Selah

Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? 10
Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

---

be pressed. It may have reference to Gen. iii. 19, and man's going *back* to the dust from which he was taken, but such passages as Job i. 21, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither,' indicate a less literal use of the word. Notice the name 'Elohim,' the God of the whole earth, not 'Yahweh,' the covenant God of Israel.

The word **poor** in verse 18 is not equivalent to the 'afflicted' of verse 12. Render, 'The patient abiding of the meek shall not perish for ever.' The moral quality of those who have learned the lesson of affliction is intended here.

19, 20. Man is frail and mortal, but he is too apt to forget this in presumptuous rebellion against God and defiance of the law of righteousness. The Psalmist prays that God will show the nations who have proudly exalted themselves against Israel, and who may easily do so again, their inherent weakness, that they may learn to reverence Jehovah, Israel's God.

PSALM X. A PRAYER OF THE OPPRESSED.

The enemy in this Psalm, or part of a Psalm, must be understood to mean the wicked within the pale of Israel, and the complaint of the Psalmist concerns the condition of the righteous within his own community. A different state of society from that described in Ps. ix is implied here, a much more considerable difference than that 'change of mood' which Cheyne thinks has caused 'a later editor to bisect the Psalm.'

No very definite outline of thought is discernible, but we may say that verses 1 and 2 describe the state of the land generally; verses 3-11 contain a sharply defined characterization of the wicked which may very well have come from another source; while verses 12-18, including stanzas from Koph to Tau, the last four letters of the alphabet, appeal to God to intervene and break the power of the ungodly.

2 In the pride of the wicked the poor is hotly pursued;
Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.
3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,
And the covetous renounceth, *yea,* contemneth the LORD.
4 The wicked, in the pride of his countenance, *saith,* He will not require *it.*
All his thoughts are, There is no God.
5 His ways are firm at all times;
Thy judgements are far above out of his sight:
As for all his adversaries, he puffeth at them.
6 He saith in his heart, I shall not be moved:
To all generations I shall not be in adversity.

1, 2. 'Why dost thou hide thyself?' God is sometimes said to hide His eyes, Isa. i. 15; sometimes His ears, i.e. be deaf, Lam. iii. 56; sometimes, as here, Himself, see Isa. xlv. 15. Such a state of mind as that described in the latter part of Ps. ix is remote; the conditions have changed and the tone of the Psalmist's plea differs accordingly.

3. Here begins a section which fits fairly well into the body of the Psalm, but it has been adjudged as of different origin, partly because of the breaking of the alphabetic structure, partly because of its abrupt opening, and partly because of the characteristic style. 'The description of the wicked is as a black rock damming the river, but it flows on beneath and emerges beyond.' (Maclaren.) Render, 'And in his covetousness renounceth'; boasting that he has all he wants without acknowledging God, the wicked man renounces all allegiance, and even ventures in practice to despise God.

4. As elsewhere the Psalmist says, 'I am—prayer,' so here he says, 'All the thoughts of the wicked are—no God.' The word for **thoughts** means properly deep and artful devices, hence it is not the ideas merely, but the whole course of action of the wicked which is said to imply that there is no God, or none who takes notice of men.

5, 6. His ways are firm. Compare lxxiii. 4, 5, 'Their strength is firm.' The experience might be illustrated from W. Watson's bitter poem:—

'Fortune, I fear, hath oftenest come,
When we forgot, when we forgot!'

The man in prosperity scorns the possibility of change.

His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression: 7
Under his tongue is mischief and iniquity.
He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: 8
In the covert places doth he murder the innocent:
His eyes are privily set against the helpless.
He lurketh in the covert as a lion in his den: 9
He lieth in wait to catch the poor:
He doth catch the poor, when he draweth him in his net.
He croucheth, he boweth down, 10
And the helpless fall by his strong ones.
He saith in his heart, God hath forgotten: 11
He hideth his face; he will never see it.
Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: 12
Forget not the poor.
Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God, 13
And say in his heart, Thou wilt not require *it*?

---

7. A description of the evil words of the evil man; he is proficient in (1) railing, (2) lying, and (3) bullying; there is a store of such precious wares as it were hoarded in his mouth and **under his tongue,** for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'

8–11. Various kinds of ill treatment are inflicted on those who are too feeble to resist it. The unwalled villages were open to the depredations of men who were little better than brigands. Jephthah gathered such a band of discontented 'vain fellows' round him, Judges xi. 3; the passage Prov. i. 10 describes their habits at length; compare also Hos. vi. 9, and the man in Luke x. 30 who fell among robbers on the Jericho road. The imperfect tenses used through the paragraph indicate persistent habit.

An emphasis is laid on the ambush, the secret preparation before the open violence. The figure sometimes seems to be that of a wild beast lurking for prey, sometimes (verse 10) as of a slave-hunter dragging his victim into imprisonment, and bending and crouching the better to take him unawares. In verse 11 is a fresh statement of the God-ignoring, God-contemning spirit in which this compound of the oppressor and the coward carries on his nefarious practices.

12, 13. An appeal that God will manifest Himself, and show that this arrogant self-confidence is vain.

14 Thou hast seen *it*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to take it into thy hand:
The helpless committeth *himself* unto thee;
Thou hast been the helper of the fatherless.
15 Break thou the arm of the wicked;
And as for the evil man, seek out his wickedness till thou find none.
16 The LORD is King for ever and ever:
The nations are perished out of his land.
17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the meek:
Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:
18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed,
That man which is of the earth may be terrible no more.

---

14. The Psalmist is sure that God sees all this and watches, not 'that He may require it' (A. V.), but that he may 'take it into His own hand,' rule and over-rule, as He did the evil-doing of Joseph's brethren (Gen. xlv. 5, 8). God has been the helper of the needy in the past, but the Psalmist desires to see a fresh proof of His power.

15. seek out may mean (1) require, i. e. punish, or (2) extirpate, destroy. The former seems to be the meaning; as a strict judge may do his work so thoroughly that there shall be a clean sheet at the next assize.

16. A note of triumph in the midst of trouble, as in Ps. ix a pleading note occurs in the midst of triumph. The mention of **nations** again reminds us of Ps. ix. Probably **are perished** is a prophetic perfect: God is King, and will not let the usurper rule long in a realm of which He says, 'The land is mine,' Lev. xxv. 23.

17, 18. The faith of the saints shall be justified. In the last line read, 'That mortals of the earth may be terrible no more.' Echoes of Ps. ix are heard again ere the close. Puny man is to be shown his true position. 'Dressed in a little brief authority,' he has played 'fantastic tricks before high heaven,' but he shall do so no longer. When the God who has been hiding Himself takes their mischief and spite into His own hand, its powerlessness shall be seen, and, in the words of another Psalm, the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

For the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David. **11**

In the LORD put I my trust: 1
How say ye to my soul,
Flee *as* a bird to your mountain?
For, lo, the wicked bend the bow, 2
They make ready their arrow upon the string,
That they may shoot in darkness at the upright in heart.
If the foundations be destroyed, 3

PSALM XI. THE SONG OF THE STEADFAST.

A true lyric, flowing forth at one rush of the stream, broken somewhat in its fall, but with many glancing lights and colours, as well as shadows, playing over it. It is bright, cheerful, trustful—Greatheart's reply to Faintheart. If the marks of David's style are freshness, vividness and force, such as belong to an early age of psalmody; a clear, direct outlook, like Chaucer's, upon the facts of life; a just perception of the bearing of these upon religion and the bearing of religion upon them; this Psalm may well be his. It suits David's position at several points of his history, perhaps best the time when he was at the court of Saul, see 1 Sam. xviii. His foes are active; his friends counsel flight. A coward or a merely prudent man would comply; a brave man would rally his powers to meet the danger; a saint holds his ground, trusting in God.

The Psalm falls easily into two parts: verses 1-3, the danger; verses 4-7, the grounds of confidence. But the Psalmist's complete confidence is first stated, then the difficulties in its way are allowed to have full scope, after which they are triumphantly surmounted.

1. Read, 'In Jehovah have I taken refuge.' The whole issue is here. A desertion of the post means a treachery to faith and Him in whom faith reposes. R. V. marg. 'Flee, ye birds,' addressed to David and his companions. David speaks of being hunted like a partridge on the mountains (1 Sam. xxvi. 20), and 'chasing sore like a bird' seems to have been proverbial (Lam. iii. 52).

2. This verse and the next form part of the address of timid friends. The description of the machinations of wicked foes is intended to intimidate and shake confidence.

shoot in darkness is a literal rendering, but perhaps 'unseen' is better in English. Men may stab in the dark, but not shoot arrows.

3. Render, 'When the foundations are being destroyed.' Timid counsellors plead further that there is no safety when in

What can the righteous do?
4 The Lord is in his holy temple,
The Lord, his throne is in heaven;
His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.
5 The Lord trieth the righteous:
But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.
6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares;
Fire and brimstone and burning wind shall be the portion of their cup.
7 For the Lord is righteous; he loveth righteousness:
The upright shall behold his face.

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the state the very authorities are arrayed against goodness, or when the fundamental principles of righteousness are disregarded. The marginal rendering, 'What hath the righteous wrought?' leads to the same point by another road—no help is to be looked for, therefore flee while there is time.

4. Another strain begins here. Whether the persecuted man flees or stands his ground depends on where his eyes are fixed. The Psalmist looks upwards. Whilst timid counsellors round him see danger from man, he sees Jehovah on His throne, with 'the eyes of His glory' watching all. The **temple** here is clearly declared to be heaven, and this suggests a wider use of the word elsewhere.

his eyelids try: say some commentators, because the eyelids contract when one would examine an object closely. More probably 'eyelids' is only used as parallel to 'eyes'; the word 'try' properly refers to the smelting of minerals.

5. Render, 'Jehovah by trial approveth the righteous'; in P.B.V., 'alloweth,' which has the same meaning. God tries or proves all, but approves only those who come well out of trial. Compare the double rendering possible in Phil. i. 9, 'discriminate things that differ,' and 'approve things excellent.'

6. One version reads 'coals of fire,' instead of **snares.** But the Psalmist is not afraid of mixed metaphors; see below, **the portion of their cup.** Whether the reference in **fire and brimstone and burning wind** be to the destruction of Sodom, or the eruption of a volcano, or the simoom of the desert, the idea is that from the skies comes a tempest which seizes the fugitive, entangles his footsteps, and then suffocates and destroys him.

7. A foundation is laid here which cannot be destroyed.

For the Chief Musician ; set to the Sheminith. A Psalm of David. 12

Help, LORD ; for the godly man ceaseth ; 1
For the faithful fail from among the children of men.
They speak vanity every one with his neighbour : 2
With flattering lip, and with a double heart, do they speak.

Jehovah is righteous in Himself, therefore 'He loveth righteous deeds,' as R. V. marg. has it, and only what He loves can ultimately stand. In the last clause there is ambiguity. A. V. has 'His countenance doth behold the upright,' i. e. God sees, approves, and will maintain their cause : R. V., with the best moderns, **The upright shall behold his face,** i. e. they shall be admitted to His presence, regarded with His favour, abide in His home and share the unspeakable joy of the Beatific Vision. The latter of the two renderings is undoubtedly to be preferred : it is not usual to say that God's face beholds, but that He beholds, and there need be no discrepancy between this and the statement that none can see God's face and live. The conditions of this spiritual vision are left all undetermined ; like some other brief sayings of the Psalmist, the phrase remains in its simplicity, splendidly undefined.

PSALM XII. PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL AMONG THE FAITHLESS.

This Psalm also was written in a time of persecution to express unshaken confidence in God. Some writers ascribe it to David during his life as an outlaw, but it bears marks of a later age. The description of the state of society in verses 1 and 2 finds a much more apt parallel in the writings of the prophets, e. g. Hosea or Jeremiah. The mention of the flatterers and their hypocrisy is a part of the same picture.

The Psalm falls into two equal parts : verses 1–4, the prayer ; 5–8, the answer. For the musical phrase 'set to the Sheminith,' see Introd. p. 15.

1. The word **Help** or 'Save' is a comprehensive one, and must be understood as including more than 'put in safety' (verse 6). The whole Psalm is an exposition of what the writer desires.

the godly man ceaseth, &c. The danger arises from the failure in the Psalmist's time of two virtues very apt to disappear in an artificial state of society—kindliness and fidelity. Compare the picture in Isa. i. 16, 17, 23. What is needed is the steadfast, God-fearing character, kindly and helpful in all human relations, but staunch as only religious principle can make a man. The plea of this verse is that such men are no longer to be found.

2. On the other hand, unreality, deception, and inconsistency, three vices closely akin, abound everywhere. The man with **a double heart** is the opposite of one with 'a single eye.' The

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips,
The tongue that speaketh great things:
4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail;
Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?
5 For the spoiling of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
Now will I arise, saith the LORD;
I will set him in safety at whom they puff.
6 The words of the LORD are pure words;
As silver tried in a furnace on the earth,
Purified seven times.
7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,
Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.
8 The wicked walk on every side,
When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

---

antithesis to the combined falsehood and unkindness of these men is admirably expressed in Paul's phrase, 'dealing truly in love,' Eph. iv. 15.

3, 4. The punishment which these flatterers and traitors deserve will come—may it come! True, their self-confidence is complete. Their clever tongues, they think and say, can accomplish anything; but God is not deceived, and will not be mocked, in His own time He will overthrow their devices.

5. Now will I arise, saith the LORD, &c. In dramatic fashion the Psalmist represents God as speaking and preparing to act. In the last line render, with R. V. marg., 'I will set him in the safety for which he pants.'

6. The trustworthiness of the Divine word is joyfully recalled; what God has promised He will perform. The brevity of the phrase **a furnace on the earth** makes it obscure. The reference is to the molten metal flowing down from the furnace to the ground. **seven times**, that is, completely.

7, 8. Some of the best critics would transpose these two verses. Certainly the last verse forms an anti-climax, and the seventh would bring the Psalm to a triumphant conclusion. But we are not at liberty to re-arrange the Psalmist's thoughts, and the closing words as they stand bring back the sad picture of verse 1 which seems to be darkening the writer's vision.

Still, the stress of the thought lies on verse 7, God knows and will preserve His own. That is the fundamental, all-important fact, though **when vileness is exalted among the sons of men,** For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. 13

How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me for ever? 1
How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul, 2
Having sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
Consider *and* answer me, O Lord my God: 3
Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;
Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; 4

---

the wicked stalk and strut to and fro, and the world is upside-down. We need not think that the Psalmist has lost courage at the last moment, though, as Perowne says, 'the relapse into gloom at the close is unparalleled.' His faith has not failed, but he cries 'Help!' once more in a tone which he is assured will be heard.

Psalm XIII. *Quo usque Domine!* 'How long, O Lord?'

This Psalm begins in as low a key as the last, but it ends in complete joy of faith. The writer is apparently afraid of one personal enemy, in whom is concentrated the hostility of many. If David wrote the Psalm, it could be only in reference to Saul; but in all probability it belongs to a much later period, and the language is appropriate, like that of Pss. x and xii, to the condition of the pious community in Israel in the later pre-Exilic period.

The Psalm was a favourite with Calvin, and inspired the evening hymn of Anatolius, used so long in the Eastern Church and popularized by many translations. It contains three stanzas which may be thus summarized: verses 1 and 2, trouble; verses 3 and 4, prayer; verses 5 and 6, relief.

1. There is no real contradiction in the question, 'How long wilt thou forget-for-ever?' The last three words form one idea. Sorrow makes the hours drag, and the Psalmist asks how long he is to be utterly God-forsaken, as if lost in endless oblivion. The obvious contradiction in the mode of expression is eloquent of his state of mind. Or possibly the sufferer recognizes the suggestion that he may be permanently forgotten as a temptation, and appeals to God to drive it away.

2. Take counsel means make plans, however hopeless: as a prisoner spends time in devising impossible methods of escape.

3. Render, 'Behold and answer . . . lest I sleep in death.' If God looks his way, his **eyes** will be 'lightened,' i. e. he will receive fresh strength and courage. Compare the case of Jonathan fatigued and faint, 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29.

Lest mine adversaries rejoice when I am moved.
5 But I have trusted in thy mercy;
My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation:
6 I will sing unto the LORD,
Because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

14 For the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David.

1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.
They are corrupt, they have done abominable works;

5, 6. The joy of faith. Nothing has happened to change the Psalmist's tone, except that 'everything' which is implied in the revelation of Divine truth, and the dawning of new light upon the soul within. 'It is the Lord who rises, with healing in His wings.' The storms still rage outside, but David, as Luther says, 'sings quietly his little Psalm.'

PSALM XIV. A SIGH OVER A GODLESS WORLD.

To what period and conditions of life does this Psalm refer? Several data are before us which enable us to give an approximate answer to this question. (1) It describes a depraved and corrupt age. Some have supposed the reference in verse 2 to be to primitive times, Gen. vi, xi, &c., but the writer is adapting the language which describes an earlier generation to his own. (2) 'My people' in verse 4 must indicate either a period of oppression of Israel by a foreign power, or of the godly within the nation by evil rulers, or both. (3) Verse 7 might seem to imply a post-Exilic date: but (*a*) the phrase 'turn the captivity' may be used of a general restoration of fortune, see note; and (*b*) this verse may be a liturgical addition. (4) The Psalm occurs again in a later collection as Ps. liii, with some slight modifications, the name Yahweh being changed to Elohim, together with other changes discussed in their place. Ps. liii is apparently the later form, and its place in a later collection implies the lapse of a considerable interval.

We come to the conclusion, then, that this Psalm was written under the later Monarchy; perhaps in the time of Jeremiah, the condition of the nation at the time presenting several parallel features. But it may have been somewhat earlier, say in the time of Manasseh.

It may be divided thus: verses 1-3, description of prevailing corruption; 4-6, God is mindful of His own; 7, concluding prayer.

1. On the word **fool,** see a more complete study in the

There is none that doeth good.
The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children 2
of men,
To see if there were any that did understand,
That did seek after God.
They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; 3
There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Introduction to Vol. II. We may remark here, however, the moral and practical character of Jewish thought. 'Wisdom' always has reference to character, and 'folly' is never far removed from wickedness. An intellectual element of course is essential to wisdom, but it is not prominent as in Hellenism.

Here the 'fool' is not a speculative atheist, but a man who in practice lives as if there were no God that judgeth in the earth. Compare Jer. v. 12, 'They have denied the Lord, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us'; Rom. i. 28, 'They refused to have God in their knowledge.'

said in his heart means 'persuaded himself,' so that this maxim became a ruling principle of action. Here is sufficient proof of folly, says the Psalmist; it is further shown in the **corrupt** and **abominable** deeds which spring from depraved and godless hearts. Both the earliest and latest Scriptures illustrate these 'abominations' only too abundantly. The picture of the world before the Flood, whencesoever derived, rivals in its lurid colours of corruption the Rome of the Apocalypse.

2. The language is borrowed from Gen. vi, and is strongly anthropomorphic in character. God is represented as permitting man to go on in his own ways, but from time to time intervening. He **looked down** after closing or averting His eyes (the word is used of bending forward out of a window in 2 Kings ix. 30), or He would 'come down' after comparative inactivity. As in the building of the tower of Babel, wickedness is suffered to ripen before it is cut off. The Titans are struck down when Pelion piled on Ossa approaches the gates of heaven.

To **understand** or 'deal wisely' is impossible, according to O. T. teaching, to those who do not 'seek God.' Practical mastery of life is given only to men who know something, and desire to know more, of the Divine will.

3. They are all gone aside, &c.: a sweeping condemnation, expressing in intelligible hyperbole widespread corruption. The verses are quoted in Rom. iii. 10–12. Clauses from other Psalms interwoven by Paul in verses 14–17 are found in some leading MSS.

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And call not upon the LORD.
5 There were they in great fear:
For God is in the generation of the righteous.
6 Ye put to shame the counsel of the poor,
Because the LORD is his refuge.

---

of the LXX here. They have made their way into the P.B.V. through the Vulgate, Coverdale translating from the Latin.

In Jer. v. 1 the diligent search of the prophet discovers none in Jerusalem who are doing righteousness or seeking truth; so in Zeph. i. 12 God is represented as 'searching Jerusalem with candles' to punish the practical atheism of the time. The word **filthy** is from a root meaning to turn sour, hence, become tainted, putrid.

4. Supply the words, 'God speaketh.' Are these offenders worse than ox or ass (Isa. i. 3), and have they not sense enough to understand the folly and evil of their ways? Or, as some versions have it, shall they not be made to know, i. e. feel, by the sharp punishment which will overtake them?

my people may mean the godly few in Israel, or Israel itself as God's people under the hand of the oppressor. The latter is in this case the more likely. **Eat up . . .** as **they eat bread** may imply more than a metaphor. Jer. ii. 3 speaks of 'a devouring of Israel,' and verse 17 describes the invaders 'eating up the harvest which thy sons and daughters should eat.'

5. Render, 'There feared they with great fear.' The word 'there' is emphatic; the Psalmist vividly realizes a spot where a blow fell, as with the suddenness of lightning. Some refer it to the Egyptians at the Red Sea, surely too far-fetched an allusion. Baethgen and others suppose a reference to an unknown event of the nature of a judgement. Perhaps better, God is represented as looking out upon the evil-doing, He speaks in remonstrance, and then panic must seize the offenders, 'they feared' being a prophetic perfect. For, it is added, **God is in the generation of the righteous,** He 'knows their way,' He cares for and will vindicate their cause.

6. Render, 'Ye would put to shame'—or 'frustrate'—'the counsel of the afflicted. Yea, but Jehovah is his refuge.' R.V. marg. gives substantially the same meaning, 'Ye did put to shame . . . but.' The 'counsel' of the oppressed points to some good work they had undertaken, as e. g. the building of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah.

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! 7
When the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people,
Then shall Jacob rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

A Psalm of David. 15

LORD, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? 1
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, 2
And speaketh truth in his heart.

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7. For the phrase 'turn the captivity' in its general use see Job xlii. 10, where it means 'restored to fortune'; Zeph. ii. 7, 'visit and bring again their captivity'; in Amos ix. 14 and Hos. vi. 11 it is used of the earlier captivity of Israel under Assyria.

This verse may be a liturgical addition. Such a practice was common; a parallel is found in the doxology added later to the Lord's Prayer. The verse as it stands reads somewhat abrupt, but it may have stood part of the text from the beginning.

PSALM XV. THE GUESTS IN GOD'S HOUSE.

This Psalm has been called by Cheyne a 'guest-Psalm,' because in common with others it deals with the idea of fitness to dwell in the presence of God, to be one of the guests admitted to His house and allowed to sojourn in His holy abode. It is natural to associate it with Ps. xxiv, but the phrase 'Who shall abide?' is found in prophets of different periods. Note especially Isa. xxxiii. 14, 15, the writer of which may have drawn inspiration from this Psalm. The answer here given to the question is distinctly ethical, and the composition is simple in tone and structure. There is nothing to suggest a late date, unless it be the phrase 'holy hill,' and this does not necessarily imply a late idea.

The question is propounded in verse 1; the answer is given in 2–5^b; the conclusion in 5^c.

1. The words 'tent' and 'mountain' may refer to the temporary structure for the ark on Mount Zion. The idea of 'God's guest' is still a prevalent one in the East. Robertson Smith refers to the very phrase in Arabic, *jar-Allah*, as given to one who dwells in Mecca by the holy stone.

2. He that walketh, &c. This answer is characteristic of the best spirit of Judaism. They are not all Israel who are of Israel; not all dwellers in Jerusalem, not all priests who frequent the holy place, are true guests of God. Purity of heart and life are alone well-pleasing in His sight.

The guest receives protection as well as hospitality, in this

3 He that slandereth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his friend,
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.
4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised;
But he honoureth them that fear the LORD.
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.
5 He that putteth not out his money to usury,
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

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case Divine protection. Who may claim it? The Psalmist says, only the man of integrity, who is true-hearted as well as veracious. The 'inwardness' of the N. T. is not entirely unknown in the Old.

3. Render, 'He that hath no slander upon his tongue,' and mark a change of tense in the following clauses, indicating state and habit. 'His fellow' is perhaps better than 'his friend'; it is synonymous with **neighbour,** and does not imply personal friendship. The 'taking up reproach' which might otherwise lie harmless, and passing it on to others' discredit, is too common a vice in all times.

4. A man's estimate of others forms a sure criterion of his own character. The **reprobate** represents the worthless dross of society. Such persons may be exalted, xii. 8, but it is characteristic of a degenerate age that they should make their way to the front. The true man will estimate them at their true value, whatever their rank or wealth. To venerate only the venerable, to regulate worth by 'the fear of Jehovah'—what a revolution would be created in any society by the carrying out of such principles!

For the sacredness of a promise solemnly made, see Lev. v. 4. Perhaps better render, 'Though he sweareth to his own hurt, he changeth not.'

5. Render, 'Nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.' Usury and bribery were both forbidden by the law; see Lev. xxv. 36, 37 and Deut. xxvii. 25. A change in the conditions of society has made the taking of interest for the use of money to be not only harmless but beneficial, or even necessary to civilization. The principle, however, of both these clauses abides unchangeable. It is always wrong to take unfair advantage of another's necessity, to 'grind the face' of the poor, or to employ wealth to interfere with the course of justice. The last line, **He . . . shall never be moved,** forms a fitting climax, showing the perfect tranquillity and security of 'a guest of Jehovah.'

Michtam of David. 16

Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. 1
I have said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: 2

PSALM XVI. LIFE IN GOD HERE AND HEREAFTER.

A fine expression of lofty spiritual experience. Partly because of this high spiritual tone, partly because the closing verses seem to express a definite hope of a future life, many modern critics are disposed to account this a decidedly late Psalm, even amongst those which belong to the post-Exilic period. It has been said that it contains distinct traces of Persian influence. A decision on the question of date must depend upon exegesis and upon the view taken of the history of religious thought amongst the Jews. It will not, however, escape notice that kindred expressions to those found towards the end of this Psalm are found also at the close of Pss. xi and xvii.

The main thought unquestionably is that in Jehovah Himself every true servant of His will find his highest good. The idea itself might well be found in a Psalm of David, but the mode in which the Psalmist works it out suggests a later period. The expressions in verses 9–11 do not necessarily imply the expectation of a future life. Primarily they refer to that 'portion' of blessedness which the godly man enjoys here and now in the presence and favour of Jehovah, though they may readily be understood as a venture of faith, the utterance in a prophetic spirit of a belief not shared by the Psalmist's contemporaries. See notes on those verses. The position of the Psalm thus early in the first collection may be explained if a post-Exilic date for its composition be accepted.

The Psalm contains three parts: the happiness of the service of God in its external relations, verses 1–4; its interior blessedness, 5–8; glad and confident expectation of the future, 9–11. For the word 'Michtam,' sometimes understood to mean 'epigrammatic' in style, sometimes 'golden' in quality, but probably a musical title, see Introd. p. 16.

1. Render, 'In thee have I taken refuge,' and therefore to Thee do I look for the safeguarding I need.

2. The translation of R. V., **I have said,** follows the Versions LXX, Vulg., Syr., Jer. 'Thou' (*fem.*) in A. V. refers to the soul. The latter half of the verse has been variously rendered. P. B. V. reads, 'My goods are nothing unto thee,' and other similar translations suggest that man has no merit Godwards. Thus Tennyson writes,

> 'For merit lives from man to man,
> And not from man, O Lord, to Thee.'

I have no good beyond thee.
3 As for the saints that are in the earth,
They are the excellent in whom is all my delight.
4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied that exchange *the* LORD for another *god*:
Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer,
Nor take their names upon my lips.
5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup:
Thou maintainest my lot.

But the meaning unquestionably is, as in R. V., **I have no good beyond thee,** and this forms the dominant thought of the Psalm.

3. The language is brief and obscure; possibly the text is corrupt, and many emendations have been suggested. Following R. V. the meaning is: the holy ones in the land are those whom I regard as true nobles or princes, and in their society I find delight. Others join with verse 4, 'To the saints I have said,' &c. One conjectural emendation is, 'To the saints which are in his land Jehovah shows honour'—a smooth and tame reading which sound textual criticism would at once reject as too easy to have given rise to the existing obscurity. For the word **saints,** see detached note, p. 361.

4. Idolatry is more or less ripe, and is said to be marked by 'libations of blood'—a phrase which may either be understood literally, or better, metaphorically, of sacrifices blood-stained, impure, and unacceptable. The prevalence of idolatry does not favour a post-Exilic date.

The use of **names** is significant. The name had a power of its own in Semitic worship: the Psalmist refuses to utter the names of false gods, and Zechariah says 'the names of the idols shall be cut off out of the land' (xiii. 2). Compare the watchwords 'Jesus is Lord!' and 'Jesus is accursed!' in 1 Cor. xii. 3; the distinction between Christian and unbeliever depended upon the use made of the name Jesus.

5, 6. Two figures are employed here. One refers to the allotment of land in the sacred territory of Canaan; the Levites are said to have had no separate portion, because God was their portion, Num. xviii. 20. The other is more briefly touched, the cup of blessing in the Psalmist's hand is filled with happiness because he enjoys God's favour.

The phrase **Thou maintainest** is anomalous. If this meaning

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; 6
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.
I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: 7
Yea, my reins instruct me in the night seasons.
I have set the LORD always before me: 8
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: 9
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; 10
Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.

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be kept, it implies 'Thou keepest safe as a peculiar care'; but Delitzsch renders 'Thou makest broad' or 'spacious,' and Cheyne 'Thou wilt continually be my lot.' The **lines** are the measuring-lines for determining the allotment, put for the portion itself. See a similar usage in Joshua xvii. 5 and in the Greek of 2 Cor. x. 13.

7, 8. Render, 'Yea, mine own reins instruct me.' The reins are the organs of emotion, and in the quiet hours of the night conscience often speaks. The word **instruct** implies a combination of admonition and stimulus.

Jehovah may be conceived of as **before** the Psalmist, then he will walk after Him, in His ways; or at his **right hand,** then he will walk with God, like Enoch. Either way he is secure and strong—**I shall not be moved.**

9-11. This closing strophe, says Delitzsch, 'consists of seven rays of light'; all the parts of man's being are lighted up by the presence of God. Heart, flesh and soul (glory) are all named in verse 9. The phrase **dwell in safety** was a customary one to describe Israel as abiding under the protection of God, and does not in itself necessitate any reference to a future life. The rendering 'dwell in hope' is from the LXX, and is not justified by the Hebrew.

10. thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol can hardly be understood as meaning, 'wilt bring me out of the underworld after I have passed within its grasp.' It is parallel with 'dwell in safety,' and 'not suffer to see' *Shachath*, or 'the pit': i. e. 'Thou wilt preserve me from the grave, which as a monster is ready to devour.' The K'thibh in the Hebrew has 'holy ones,' but this is almost certainly an error. R. V. follows the Q'ri, **holy one**, which should not be spelt 'Holy One' (A. V.), as if it referred to Christ, but must be understood as synonymous with 'godly'

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life:
In thy presence is fulness of joy;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

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or 'beloved' (R. V. marg.), one united to God by the bond of covenant-love. See detached note on *Chasid*, p. 360.

11. This verse confirms the general ideas suggested by the last. It does not, any more than verse 10, make any definite reference to a life of future blessedness, but it emphasizes the fact that real life is to be found in the presence and service of God. 'Thou wilt make me to know the path of life' refers to the way which the servant of God is to tread here and now; when the Psalmist speaks of **thy presence** he is not thinking of a distant heaven. In the last line he says not 'at thy right hand' (A. V.)—a translation in which a whole fallacy lurks—but, **in thy right hand** are the joys that cannot die. If we rightly interpret these profound words, the question of existence in Sheol or beyond Sheol was not before the mind of the Psalmist at all. A great spiritual truth is expressed in noble words—no more and no less.

Perowne says, 'In this Psalm, and in the next, there shines forth the bright hope of everlasting life. . . . The argument which our Lord used with the Sadducees applies here with special force.' Precisely, but only as our Lord used it. The words 'God of Abraham' do not of themselves declare a doctrine of future blessedness, but they contain implicitly what a fuller spiritual insight makes explicit. He who firmly holds the words of this Psalm to be true will find in them the germ of immortality. The Psalm is quoted by Peter in Acts ii. 25, and by Paul in Acts xiii. 35. On the whole subject of the Messianic use of the Psalms and the Jewish Hope of a Future Life, see Introduction to vol. ii. The bearing of the general considerations there adduced upon the interpretation of the Psalm before us is this. The writer's theme is the blessedness and security of life in God for himself and all who trust and serve God. The safety and joy of that life has no bounds, and the description of it given in the closing verses, while containing no explicit reference to a future life, may appropriately be used with deeper significance by those for whom Christ has 'brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.' So in the original words there is no explicit reference to a coming Messiah and his resurrection; but when he had come and was risen from the dead, the inspired apostles showed how not in David, nor in any psalmist or prophet, did this passage find its complete illustration and fulfilment. And as Christ drew the doctrine of immortality from the phrase 'God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob,' so Peter finds the doctrine of the Resurrection in the words of 'the

A Prayer of David. 17

Hear the right, O Lord, attend unto my cry; 1
Give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.
Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; 2
Let thine eyes look upon equity.
Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the 3
night;

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patriarch David,' who died, and was buried, and did not fully realize himself how God would not 'leave His Holy One to see corruption.' Inspired and living words, like those of the Psalmist, have ever their own 'springing and germinant accomplishments.'

PSALM XVII. REFUGE IN GOD FROM THE PATHS OF THE DESTROYER.

The conditions under which this Psalm was written correspond in several particulars with those of David under Saul's persecution. It presents points of similarity with Pss. vii and xi, and several critics assign all three to David. On the other hand, there is nothing specific in the phraseology which would prevent our ascribing it to a persecuted saint during or after the Exile, and the tendency of recent criticism runs in that direction. Distinct historical or objective references such as would settle the question of date are lacking here, as in other Psalms, hence the judgement of critics is usually determined by their views as to the general history of religion in Israel. The present tendency is to consider the religious experience here described as too mature for the Davidic period—a position which has not yet been proved.

The Psalm is a plea to God for the vindication of the writer's cause. The lines of demarcation of thought are not very clear, but the appeal takes on fresh urgency at verses 6 and 13, and the whole prayer may be divided into three parts: the first, a plea based on the Psalmist's conscious integrity, 1-5; the second, an appeal against the virulence of his foes, 6-12; the third presses the broad contrast between the two, 13-15.

1. A piercing **cry,** such as the Eastern does not hesitate to utter, in expressing joy or sorrow. There is a poignancy about the subject-matter of some of the petitions which fully justifies the strong word used.

2. The Psalmist asks only for justice: 'Thine eyes behold with equity' (marg.); declare the right, O Lord, and all will be well.

3. The self-justification of a man with a clear conscience. These assertions of integrity are comparative only, but real and true as far as they go.

The night is the time for (1) wandering imaginations, to which

Thou hast tried me, and findest nothing ;
I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.
4 As for the works of men, by the word of thy lips
I have kept me from the ways of the violent.
5 My steps have held fast to thy paths,
My feet have not slipped.
6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt answer me, O God :
Incline thine ear unto me, *and* hear my speech.
7 Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest
them which put their trust *in thee*
From those that rise up *against them*, by thy right hand.
8 Keep me as the apple of the eye,
Hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

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the Psalmist has not yielded ; (2) good resolves, which he has made ; hence also for (3) spiritual testing, through which he has successfully passed. Another rendering is, 'Thou findest no evil purpose ; my mouth shall not transgress.' So Hupfeld, Perowne, and Kirkpatrick. Delitzsch reads, 'Thou findest nothing. If I think evil, it shall not pass my mouth.' The former of these two translations, substantially adopted in R. V. marg., is probably the best.

4. The language of this verse suits a person better than a community, and the Davidic rather than the post-Exilic period.

by the word of thy lips might be illustrated from our Lord's use of the written word to repel the assaults of the tempter in the wilderness.

5. A further assertion of innocence, not a prayer as in A. V., 'Hold up my goings,' &c.

The **paths** or 'tracks' are the definite duties marked out by the God of righteousness.

6. I have called means, I am now calling, and claim a hearing on the grounds enumerated.

7. On the word **marvellous** see above on ix. i. It implie special intervention. Render, with R. V. marg., 'From those tha rise up against thy right hand.' This is simpler than R. V., i makes better sense, and is supported by several versions. On th other hand, it is alleged that there is no parallel in the O. T. t this mode of expression, but this is not a very serious objection.

8. The two beautiful and apposite figures of this verse hav been made familiar by O. T. usage. The 'pupil' of the eye called in Hebrew 'little son,' or sometimes 'daughter of the eye,'

From the wicked that spoil me, 9
My deadly enemies, that compass me about.
They are inclosed in their own fat: 10
With their mouth they speak proudly.
They have now compassed us in our steps: 11
They set their eyes to cast *us* down to the earth.
He is like a lion that is greedy of his prey, 12
And as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.
Arise, O LORD, 13
Confront him, cast him down:
Deliver my soul from the wicked by thy sword;
From men, by thy hand, O LORD, 14
From men of the world, whose portion is in *this* life,
And whose belly thou fillest with thy treasure:
They are satisfied with children,
And leave the rest of their substance to their babes.

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once the 'door of the eye,' Zech. ii. 8, is the centre of the organ of vision, and hence is specially precious and specially protected by Nature. The figure is used to describe the Divine care in Deut. xxxii. 10.

The metaphor of the bird with sheltering pinions is frequently employed elsewhere; see Pss. xxxvi. 7 and xci. 4. It is familiar through Christ's allusion to the hen with her brood; the reference to the eagle in Deut. xxxii. 11 is somewhat different.

9. The phraseology of this verse as well as that of verse 4 is urged as suitable to David's circumstances by those who accept his authorship, but there is nothing particularly distinctive in it.

10-12. Moral obtuseness is described by the figure of the eyes standing out with fat, or the heart being enclosed by fat, see Ps. lxxiii. 7. Many have beset the Psalmist's steps with greedy eagerness; one, however, being prominent in pursuit, is described as a lion, which, when confronted by superior strength or courage, may be compelled to crouch and retire.

13, 14. A. V. and R. V. marg. read, 'Men which are thy hand.' It is true that the wicked are sometimes described as the sword of God; compare Isa. x. 5, 'Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger!' But here such a thought is alien to the context, and mars the simplicity of the sentence.

The wicked have their reward, says the Psalmist. In the last

15 As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness:
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

18 For the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: and he said,

1 I love thee, O LORD, my strength.

two lines render, 'They are satisfied with sons, and leave their substance to their children.' Abundance of offspring is always a mark of prosperity in the East. See Job xxi. 8, 11; Ps. cxxvii. 3–5.

15. The Psalmist is content to wait for his full reward, and it is of the most spiritual kind. The clauses of this verse may be understood either as confident hopes, **I shall behold,** or as prayers, 'May I behold!' The latter is perhaps better. The prayer of Moses in Exod. xxxiii. 20 is repeated, 'I beseech thee, shew me thy glory,' with expectation of a yet more complete answer.

May I be satisfied . . . with thy likeness, more literally, thy 'form' (R. V. marg.), as in Num. xii. 8, 'the form of Jehovah shall he behold.'

But what is meant by **when I awake?** Commentators suggest: (1) each morning after the night's sleep; (2) after the night of sorrow, or doubt, or anxiety; (3) in a future life. Of the above renderings, (1) is tame and prosaic, and if (3) had been intended we should expect the language to have been more explicit. On the whole, (2) appears to be best supported by the parallels in Pss. xxx. 5, cxxxix. 18, cxliii. 10, and by the paraphrase of the LXX and Targum, 'When thy glory appears.' The words may then be left without closer definition in their suggestive simplicity. The prayer may be unquestionably fulfilled in the present life, as God grants ever clearer manifestations of Himself, and scatters from time to time the heavy gloom or the vain and foolish dreams o the Psalmist's night. But it is impossible for those who read th words in the light of fuller revelation to shut out the thought tha after the night of death the believer will awake to the full visio of God in the heavenly morn. Only the Psalmist does not sa this, he expresses a hope which contains this wonderful blosso in germ only. 'Here,' says Delitzsch, 'we see into the ver heart of the O. T. faith.' But faith it remains, all the mor wonderful that it had so little food on which to nourish it strength, so little light to guide it on its way.

PSALM XVIII. A ROYAL THANKSGIVING.

If there are any Davidic Psalms in the Psalter, this is one. Th language of verse 50 does not prove that the writer claims to b

The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; 2
My God, my strong rock, in him will I trust;

David, nor does it make it certain that another than David was the writer; though both these positions have been taken. But (1) it is directly attributed to David not only in the title, but in 2 Sam. xxii; (2) there is nothing in the subject-matter directly inconsistent with such authorship; (3) the language describing the theophany is distinctly early in character, unless a later writer has deliberately set himself to imitate an earlier style; and (4) it is very difficult to find another suitable period for its composition. The only tenable alternative to Davidic authorship is that the Psalm was composed by a later poet who wove the incidents of David's life into just such a song of thanksgiving as he might have written; and against this is to be set the vigour, earnestness, and intensely personal character of the language used. Even the more extreme opponents of early Psalms are disposed to make an exception in this case, though some would admit only a kind of Davidic basis for a later and more elaborate composition.

The strongest argument on the other side is the assumed impossibility of the early appearance of a Psalm embodying such spiritual truth and experience. Prof. Cheyne, who in an earlier volume inclined to date the Psalm as pre-Hezekian, some time ago withdrew even this measure of concession. He smiles at the idea that a 'versatile *condottiere*, chieftain and king' should have been a prophet in his old age; and puts forward a theory of two Davids, the one a 'hero of the transition from rudeness to culture,' the other—ideal only—a representative of spiritual religion.

As was stated in the Introd., p. 24, we have not the data for arriving at any absolute certainty in this matter, and it is therefore only possible to balance probabilities. As regards external evidence, we have the testimony of 2 Samuel, which contains one admittedly Davidic composition in the first chapter. This is, however, not a religious poem, and ch. xxii is not an integral part of the original narrative. The title in the Psalm appears to have been taken from the history, not vice versa; but the relation between the texts is very difficult to determine. It is supposed by the best critics that they are independent of one another, while that of the Psalter is on the whole the better of the two, as probably having been revised later. It is difficult to extract any trustworthy evidence as to date from the textual discussion. The general tone of the former part of the Psalm is early, whilst it is undeniable that the same cannot be said of verse 22, with its mention of 'judgements' and 'statutes,' or 'the afflicted people' in verse 27, whilst it is contended that the writer must have been familiar with Deuteronomy. The alleged parallels are, however, capable of another explanation.

My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.
3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised:
So shall I be saved from mine enemies.
4 The cords of death compassed me,
And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.

Probabilities point therefore on the whole to the Davidic authorship of this Psalm, with the possibility that an early composition of his was edited later and prepared for use in public worship. The period in David's life at which it was written is indicated in the title. Not in his youth, when he was struggling with foes for supremacy or for very existence; nor in the period which was overshadowed by his sin; nor when he was compassed by the infirmities of age. At the time when his victories had been won, when he was anxious to build a house for God and gracious promises had been given him through Nathan that 'the Lord would build him an house,' as recorded in 2 Sam. vii, David may well have poured out his soul in the triumphant thanksgiving of this glorious Psalm.

It may be thus subdivided: introduction, verses 1–3; description of deliverance, 4–19; the grounds of David's fidelity and devotion, 20–30; an outburst of praise in celebration of his triumph, 31–45; conclusion, 46–50.

1. Render, 'Fervently do I love thee, Jehovah, my strength.' A special word is used here for 'love,' and a special form of it, indicating close and tender affection. This preluding invocation has been said to 'touch the high-water mark of O. T. devotion,' and to form 'one of its noblest utterances.' (Maclaren.)

2. Various figures are used to set forth God as a helper. They may be arranged in three pairs. (1) A 'cliff' or cleft rock, *Sela'*, and a **rock**, hard and huge, *Tsur*; (2) a 'stronghold' or entrenchment, *Matsur*; and **a high tower,** or retreat at a precipitous height, *Misgab*; (3) a **horn,** *Keren*, and a 'buckler,' *Magen*. Translate the second line, 'My strong rock, wherein I take refuge.' It will be noticed that most of these words refer to defence rather than aggression, and many of them are just such as would be suggested to David by his wanderings, e. g. in the wilderness of En-gedi.

3. Rather, 'I call, and so am saved,' i. e. whenever I call, God hears and answers. The tense indicates habit, not futurity; or if an element of futurity be admitted, the Psalmist's confidence is better expressed by the use of the frequentative.

4–6 contains a highly figurative and impressive description of David's need. Both this and the account of God's appearance to deliver him are conceived in the characteristic forms of Hebrew poetry, and the phraseology is nowhere to be literally pressed

The cords of Sheol were round about me: 5
The snares of death came upon me.
In my distress I called upon the LORD, 6
And cried unto my God:
He heard my voice out of his temple,
And my cry before him came into his ears.
Then the earth shook and trembled, 7
The foundations also of the mountains moved
And were shaken, because he was wroth.
There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, 8
And fire out of his mouth devoured:
Coals were kindled by it.
He bowed the heavens also, and came down; 9

The fundamental idea of sore need and wonderful deliverance is to be expressed, and the Psalmist 'generalizes it in a majestic picture.' (Delitzsch.)

4. Render, 'The waves of death . . . and the floods of destruction.' 'Waves' is found in 2 Samuel, 'cords' in verse 5 and cxvi. 3. The word *Belial* (R. V. marg.) refers rather to physical than moral ruin.

5. 'Cords and snares' represent the hunter's arts, dangers of the field, as in the last verse the dangers of the flood were described. 'Prevented' in the A. V. means 'came to meet me.'

6. For the frequentative tense **called,** compare note on verse 3. **temple,** or 'palace,' i. e. heaven.

7-15. A typical description of a theophany, or manifestation of God. Parallels are to be found in the description of Sinai in Exod. xix; in the song of Deborah, Judges v; in the opening of Ps. lxviii, and in Hab. iii. The phenomena of earthquake and thunderstorm are used for the purpose, and the disturbances in nature are understood to be characteristic marks of august power, often of anger, judgement, and punishment of enemies.

8. The phraseology employed here is sometimes called 'mythological.' Anthropomorphic it certainly is, in a marked degree, but in so poetical a passage this is not felt to detract from the dignity of the subject. Metaphor is needful for the bringing home of spiritual truth to the multitude, nor can the few dispense with it entirely. Fire, smoke, hot coals, all indicate with naturalness and force the wrath of the Most High, and such figures are common in most languages, as in the O. T.; compare xcvii. 3.

9. Parallels to the phrases of this verse may be found in Isa.

And thick darkness was under his feet.
10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
Yea, he flew swiftly upon the wings of the wind.
11 He made darkness his hiding place, his pavilion round about him;
Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.
12 At the brightness before him his thick clouds passed,
Hailstones and coals of fire.
13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens,
And the Most High uttered his voice;
Hailstones and coals of fire.
14 And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;
Yea, lightnings manifold, and discomfited them.
15 Then the channels of waters appeared,

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lxiv. 1, where God rends the heavens to come down; Gen. xi. 7, where He descends to punish the builders of Babel; and Exod. xix. 16, where the storm-clouds which cause thick darkness veil His presence before a signal manifestation of Himself and His will.

10. The cherubim are winged creatures possessing symbolic significance which can only be gathered from a comparison of the several passages in which they are mentioned. They stand at the entrance of the garden of Eden, Gen. iii. 24; overshadow the mercy-seat of the ark, Exod. xxv. 18, 1 Kings vi. 23; form a kind of throne for Jehovah, 2 Kings xix. 15; and figure at length in the vision of Ezek. x. They represent in the main the powers of nature in attendance upon the Most High God, or ministering to His majesty. Here the cherub seems to figure as a spirit of the storm. Render the latter clause, 'Yea, he came swooping upon the wings of the wind.'

11. By a bold figure the dark storm-cloud forms a tent from which Jehovah emerges.

12. Render, 'From the brightness before him through his thick clouds there passed hailstones and coals of fire.' Compare Exod. xix. 18.

13. Ps. xxix furnishes a sublime comment upon this description of thunder as the voice of God. The last line, 'Hailstones and coals of fire,' should probably be omitted: so 2 Samuel and the versions.

For the title *'Elyon*, Most High God, see p. 359.

15. Read, 'Then the bed of the sea was seen, and the foundations,'

And the foundations of the world were laid bare,
At thy rebuke, O LORD,
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
He sent from on high, he took me; 16
He drew me out of many waters.
He delivered me from my strong enemy, 17
And from them that hated me, for they were too mighty
for me.
They came upon me in the day of my calamity: 18
But the LORD was my stay.
He brought me forth also into a large place; 19
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; 20
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
For I have kept the ways of the LORD, 21
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his judgements were before me, 22
And I put not away his statutes from me.

&c., phraseology descriptive of what happened at the Red Sea, see Exod. xv. 8. The phenomena are those of earthquake or hurricane.

16. We now reach the object of this display of power—David is delivered, as Luther says, like another Moses from the waters.

17–19. The deliverance is described in very general terms—a proof, according to Wellhausen, of a later hand. It must be recognized however, that here, as throughout the Psalter, it is no part of the object of the Psalmist to enter into details such as the historian expects and delights in. The language is quite adequate for the object intended, and is suitable to the deliverance from Saul—in part to David's victories over his enemies. Either a contemporary or a later writer might have given detailed descriptions had he chosen, see Pss. lxxviii and cvi; but this would have altered the whole style of composition. The **large place** of verse 19 is the usual phrase for deliverance from 'straits.'

20–24. The assertion of innocence in this section is comparative, not absolute; but it is true within well-defined limits. It is more appropriate in David's lips before his fall, or as written by another

23 I was also perfect with him,
And I kept myself from mine iniquity.
24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.
25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful;
With the perfect man thou wilt shew thyself perfect;
26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;
And with the perverse thou wilt shew thyself froward.
27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people;
But the haughty eyes thou wilt bring down.
28 For thou wilt light my lamp:

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concerning him, than as descriptive of the post-Exilic community. **Perfect with him,** in verse 23, means that the Psalmist preserved his general integrity in the sight of God, as well as among men. Compare the language of Ps. ci.

24-26. Here are laid down in bold and striking form certain principles of Divine Providence, which are seen to be reasonable as well as in accordance with experience. God's action must depend on man's attitude, else there can be no moral government or meaning in history. Cheyne expresses it differently when he says, 'an impressive statement of the eternal tragedy of history.'

Three words are used on the side of righteousness, **merciful, perfect, pure,** or, as we may say, kindliness, integrity, and holiness. One word only represents unrighteousness—a very suggestive one, **perverse,** or **froward.** If a man is at cross-purposes with righteousness he will find that Providence will, sooner or later, cross him. So in Lev. xxvi. 23, 24, 'If . . . ye will not be reformed unto me, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you; and I will smite you, even I, seven times for your sins.'

27. Render, 'For thou savest the afflicted people,
But haughty eyes thou dost abase.'

28. Here again the tenses are better understood as presents, 'thou lightest my lamp,' and 'dost enlighten my darkness'—a generalization from experience.

In 1 Kings **xi.** 36 we find the phrase, 'that David my servant may have a lamp alway before me in Jerusalem,' of the continuation of the dynasty; and Job xviii. 6 speaks of the lamp of the wicked as being put out. The parallel passage in 2 Sam. xxii. 29 represents God as Himself being the lamp of His servant.

The Lord my God will lighten my darkness.
For by thee I run upon a troop; 29
And by my God do I leap over a wall.
As for God, his way is perfect: 30
The word of the Lord is tried;
He is a shield unto all them that trust in him.
For who is God, save the Lord? 31
And who is a rock, beside our God?
The God that girdeth me with strength, 32
And maketh my way perfect.
He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*: 33
And setteth me upon my high places.
He teacheth my hands to war; 34
So that mine arms do bend a bow of brass.
Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: 35
And thy right hand hath holden me up,

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29. Render, 'I can run upon a troop,' as in the war with the Amalekites in 1 Sam. xxx. 8, 15, 23, and 'by my God I can leap over a wall,' as in attacking the Jebusites, 2 Sam. v. 6-8.

30. Whatever be the views of men, or the variations in man's conduct, God's way is flawless; His words are pure and trustworthy; His defence is sure.

31, 32. A close parallel may be observed with the passage Deut. xxxii. 31 foll., but the Psalmist is as likely to be original as the writer of the song. The word 'Eloah' for God, found four times in the Psalter, is an old word, perhaps specially indicating God as reverenced. God's way is 'perfect' towards the 'perfect' man.

33. He enables me to travel rapidly, yet securely makes my feet swift and yet sure in the most difficult places, like a chamois among the rocks. See Deut. xxxii. 13.

34. Brass, an amalgam of copper and zinc, stands sometimes for copper, as in Deut. viii. 9. Here, and usually, for bronze, a compound of copper and tin. A metal bow, such as is mentioned in Job xx. 24, would be made of bronze.

35. Emphasis is laid here upon the Divine help which enabled David to gain the victories hereinafter described. Else the catalogue of his achievements would sound vainglorious, like the cuneiform inscriptions which in high-flown language set forth the conquests of the Assyrians.

And thy gentleness hath made me great.
36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,
And my feet have not slipped.
37 I will pursue mine enemies, and overtake them:
Neither will I turn again till they are consumed.
38 I will smite them through that they shall not be able to rise:
They shall fall under my feet.
39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle:
Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.
40 Thou hast also made mine enemies turn their backs unto me,
That I might cut off them that hate me.
41 They cried, but there was none to save:
Even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.
42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind:
I did cast them out as the mire of the streets.

In the last clause the word **gentleness** means properly 'lowliness,' a strange word to apply to God, yet one of great beauty and truth. Compare 'He humbleth himself' in cxiii. 5, 6. The translation 'condescension,' R. V. marg., gives the idea, but is too stiff. The LXX timidly paraphrases by a word which means 'kindly discipline,' and this is probably the origin of P. B. V. 'loving correction.'

37. The tenses here and in subsequent verses cause some difficulty. Strange though it may seem to an English reader, they are susceptible of very different meanings. They may indicate a retrospect of the past, as A. V. 'I have pursued'; or a forecast of the future, as R. V. **I will pursue**; or a broad general statement, as in the present 'I pursue.' Commentators are divided as to which shade of meaning predominates. Verse 40 is retrospective, and may carry the others with it; but in verses 37 and 38, 44 and 45 it seems much better to render by the English historical present, 'I pursue, I overtake . . . as soon as they hear, they obey,' &c.

41. 'They cried . . . even unto Jehovah': does this imply that the enemies in question were Israelites? Not necessarily. Prayer

Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; 43
Thou hast made me the head of the nations:
A people whom I have not known shall serve me.
As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me: 44
The strangers shall submit themselves unto me.
The strangers shall fade away, 45
And shall come trembling out of their close places.
The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; 46
And exalted be the God of my salvation:
Even the God that executeth vengeance for me, 47
And subdueth peoples under me.
He rescueth me from mine enemies: 48
Yea, thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me:
Thou deliverest me from the violent man.

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to a God whom they had proved to be mighty may have been wrung from heathen foes in their despair.

43. 2 Sam. xxii. 44 reads 'my people.' The two passages together remind us that David was engaged in both civil and foreign wars. The uncertainty of the tenses appears here again, see R. V. marg. Some render, 'did serve me'; better in the present, as Driver and others, 'A people whom I have not known serve me'; and so in the next two verses. The clause 'I knew not' means that nations from a distance sent in messages of submission at the very report of David's prowess and conquests.

45. 'They fade . . . they come trembling': their forces dwindle away, and they come from their hiding-places with offers of surrender.

46–50. May be taken as a closing, though somewhat prolonged doxology.

47. The meaning of **vengeance** should be rightly understood. It is said in xciv. 1 to belong to God; 'vengeance is mine,' Rom. xii. 20. But that power of avenging evil which God keeps in His own hands and puts forth in His own time and way has in it no personal vindictiveness; its object is the vindication of righteousness—a very different thing.

48. The change from the plural to the singular—**enemies, violent man**—and vice versa is common in the Psalms. The singular sometimes stands for the class collectively, and the plural does not shut out the thought of an individual prominent in the writer's mind.

49 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among
the nations,
And will sing praises unto thy name.
50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king;
And sheweth lovingkindness to his anointed,
To David and to his seed, for evermore.

19 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.
1 The heavens declare the glory of God;

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49. The proclamation of Jehovah **among the nations** has been adduced as evidence of late date, but without sufficient reason. This verse is quoted by Paul in Rom. xv. 9 of the Gentiles as heirs of salvation.

50. The opening phrase of this verse is an excellent rendering of the words which mean literally 'He magnifieth the salvation(s) of his king,' and the mention of the 'king' and of 'David' raises the question whether this verse is an addition of a later poet, or whether David himself thus sums up the whole lessons of his life and the fulfilment of the promises made to him by Nathan in 2 Sam. vii.

It is possible that David wrote the words himself, but the mention of 'David and his seed' reads much more like the addition of an editor preparing a Psalm of David for use in the worship of the congregation.

PSALM XIX. GOD IN HIS WORKS AND IN HIS WORD.

It is clear from the example of Ps. cviii that different Psalms were sometimes combined to form a new whole, and from 1 Chron. xv that portions of Psalms were sometimes so blended together. It is very probable that such a case of combination is before us in Ps. xix, since the style and rhythm and phraseology of verses 1-6 differ considerably from verses 7-11. But if this is so, the union has been most skilfully effected, while verses 12-14, which belong to the latter portion, constitute an appropriate close to the whole.

'Two worlds are ours,' says the Christian poet: this Psalm enables us to understand them both. It shows us how to study intelligently the book of nature which he 'who runs may read,' and also that 'mystic heaven and earth within,' which is 'plain as the sea and sky' only to him who has learned the secret of Jehovah. Most readers of this Psalm will recall the passage of Kant—often incorrectly quoted—'There are two things that fill my sou with holy reverence and ever-growing wonder—the spectacle o

And the firmament sheweth his handywork.
Day unto day uttereth speech, 2

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the starry sky that virtually annihilates us as physical beings, and the moral law which raises us to infinite dignity as intelligent agents.' But it is only as the dark dome of the soul within is illumined by the light of moral and spiritual truth that the full meaning of the star-lit sky without can be understood. And it is the glory of Israel that she more than any other nation has helped to teach the world this lesson. This Psalm has played no mean part in impressing it upon succeeding generations.

Hence, while we are quite prepared to recognize the distinction between the two parts of the Psalm, marked by the change of names from El, the God of creation, to Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel and God of Grace, these two portions blend admirably together, and each gains in significance by the conjunction. If the latter was written as an appendix to the former, or if a third Psalmist combined the compositions of other two, a certain religious insight or genius is displayed in the union. For the instruction of generations Ps. xix has been, and will remain, beautifully and indissolubly one.

The tone of the latter half of the Psalm, reminding us constantly of Ps. cxix, would suggest a post-Exilic date, whilst the first half might well have been written by David himself. Certain 'Aramaisms,' as they have been called, in verses 3 and 5 have been alleged as objections to this. But the forms may be regarded as poetical, and we are decidedly of opinion, with Ewald, that verses 1-6 form a fragment of an early and noble lyric.

1. The revelation of God in nature is here illustrated from the sky and the sun. Perhaps the original poem contained a fuller description of the splendours of creation, since verse 6 breaks off abruptly. The glory of God in the storm is set forth in Ps. xxix; in Ps. xciii the ocean displays His majesty, while in Ps. civ His marvellous works both in heaven and in earth are described at length.

glory: i. e. manifested excellence. The Psalmist is not troubled by any contrast between 'nature' and nature's God, such as has disturbed the minds of students of physical science in later days. Those who would see in the sky what the Psalmist saw must add to faith knowledge, and to knowledge faith.

firmament, derived from a root meaning 'to stretch,' is, as in Gen. i. 6, the name of the expanse of sky immediately over the earth.

2. Day and night have each a message; when darkness comes, more, not less, is told us of the heavenly orbs. 'If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life?'

And night unto night sheweth knowledge.
3 There is no speech nor language;
Their voice cannot be heard.
4 Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

The word for **sheweth** is a different one from that used in verse 1, and this should be noted in English. Render:—

> 'Day unto day poureth forth speech,
> And night unto night proclaimeth knowledge.'

3. The three clauses of this verse are impressive in their extreme brevity. Render, 'There is no speech, neither are there words, their voice is not heard.' The familiar rendering of A. V., 'There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,' is that of LXX and Greek versions, of the Targum and Jerome, of Luther and Calvin, and, in modern times, of Delitzsch. It means that the words of these witnesses are heard in every language and every nation of mankind, and it may be argued for this view that verse 4 is continuous with it in meaning, whereas the translation of R. V. would seem to require an adversative 'but' to begin that verse. But this meaning of 'speech' and 'language' is not in accordance with the Hebrew; the introduction of 'where' in A. V. is uncalled for and arbitrary: while the very independence of the clauses as rendered above, without introductory conjunctions, is striking and forcible.

The meaning of the verse as now translated is admirably brought out by Addison, who describes the 'solemn silence' in which the orbs revolve. His phrase 'no real voice nor sound' must be understood in the proper etymological sense of 'real'—concrete, objective, audible to the outward ears. It is quite consistent with the line that follows, 'Forever singing as they shine,' for that voice is audible only to 'reason's ear.' The music of each celestial orb which, according to Shakespeare, 'in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins' is unheard by those whom 'the muddy vesture of decay' doth still close grossly in; but Addison follows the Psalmist in teaching that men may still hear the voice which says, 'The hand that made us is Divine.'

4. World-wide is this message; because so spiritual, therefore universal.

line is to be understood as in xvi. 6; the measuring line which delimitates is put for the region marked out and possessed

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, 5
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course.
His going forth is from the end of the heaven, 6
And his circuit unto the ends of it:
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul: 7
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: 8
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the
eyes.
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: 9
The judgements of the LORD are true, *and* righteous
altogether.

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cf. Jer. xxxi. 39. The 'sound' of P. B. V. follows the LXX and other versions, and is preserved by Paul in Rom. x. 18 to illustrate the universality of the Gospel message. It depends upon another reading of the Hebrew, and gives a good sense.

5. The fine comparisons of this verse belong to the earlier period of Hebrew poetry, and are now in themselves classical. Fresh, joyful, strong and confident in his strength, ready for a great and successful future is the bridegroom-hero who represents the sun. 'Goeth forth from his canopy' is a tempting translation, but the custom of being married under a canopy, *Chuppah*, belongs to later Hebrew usage. For the phrase 'coming out of the bridal chamber' cf. Joel ii. 16.

6. The natural appearances of the sky are obviously followed here. The sun appears to revolve, beginning at one 'end of the heaven,' and his circuit is 'to the ends of it again,' diffusing universal life and blessing. It is difficult to think either that a poem ended with these words, or that a Psalmist passed immediately from them to those which follow.

7-9. The praises of the Law. Rhythm and structure change. A peculiar measure known as the Quiah or Elegiac metre is employed. Even in English it can be seen how each line is divided into two parts, a longer and a shorter, by a caesura, or break. This scheme of verse, says Delitzsch, 'as it were rises higher, draws deeper breaths, rises and falls like the waves of the sea; for the Torah inspires the poet more than does the sun.' It does not follow that the more elaborate structure is the more effective, and yet it has a dignity of its own. In three verses are to be

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine
gold:
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
In keeping of them there is great reward.
12 Who can discern *his* errors?
Clear thou me from hidden *faults*.

---

found six names and twelve encomiums of the law which this Psalmist, like the writer of Ps. cxix, delights to praise in varied strains.

The names are **law,** *Torah*, a general Divine revelation; **testimony,** *Eduth*, that which attests the will of God and hence forms the norm for man; **precepts,** *Pekudim*, distinct directions in details; **commandment,** *Mitzvah*, a statutory deliverance summing up the whole; **fear,** *Yir'ah*, a subjective feeling which is intended to give objective direction, since a man's actions should correspond with his reverence for God; and **judgements,** *Mishpātim*, right decisions constituting in themselves a kind of body of law for guidance.

So with the adjectives and participial clauses which describe the excellence of God's revelation of Himself in His word. This is said to be **perfect, restoring the soul,** i. e. it refreshes as with food and comfort, re-vivifies, not 'brings back from wandering.' It is **sure,** and as 'sound doctrine' may be relied upon to give the guidance of steady principle, **making wise the simple** who are easily led astray. It is **right, rejoicing the heart,** since joy must spring from the consciousness of being in one's right place and travelling in the right road. It is **pure, enlightening the eyes,** for light must be clear and illumining. It is **clean, enduring for ever;** purity abides, immorality is corrupting, corruptible and transient. Finally these manifold declarations of God's will in all their aspects are **true,** and **righteous altogether**—a break in the metre occurring here, which rounds the paragraph off to a close.

10. Other lines of praise lead to a comparison with the preciousness of gold and the sweetness of honey, as in Ps. cxix. Translate with R. V. marg., 'honey and the outpouring of the honeycomb.' The purest honey is the virgin honey which flows freely and naturally from the cells.

11. The true servant of God understands the value of warnings, from which others shrink as interfering with the enjoyment of following their own way. He has discovered wherein lies the reward of obedience.

12. The effect of contemplating law is not immediately pleasant.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; 13
Let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be
perfect,
And I shall be clear from great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my 14
heart be acceptable in thy sight,
O LORD, my rock, and my redeemer.

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. **20**

The LORD answer thee in the day of trouble; 1

It forms a mirror which shows each man his actual self—no lovely sight. The word translated 'errors' indicates those slighter and more venial faults which easily escape notice, but which testify to a roving will. Jeremiah (xvii. 9) brings out the same thought of the subtlety of sin, the self-deception, the unfathomable evil of the human heart. The Psalmist prays that he may not be held guilty in respect of such wanderings of desire.

13. The distinction between sins of ignorance and sins of presumption—literally those which 'boil over' with wantonness and daring—is familiar in the law. See Lev. iv. 1, 13; Num. xv. 22. According to the text of R. V. the Psalmist prays to be preserved from these two kinds of sin—venial and mortal; in more modern phraseology—then he will be perfect indeed.

Many modern interpreters, however, prefer the rendering of R. V. marg., 'from the proud,' i. e. oppressors who, as many Psalms suggest, made life hard for the faithful followers of God's law.

Let them not have dominion may be readily understood of sins which enslave and subjugate, and an excellent N. T. meaning may be deduced from this rendering, but the analogy of other passages favours the marginal reading.

14. The LXX reads, 'alway acceptable,' hence the P. B. V. This closing prayer bespeaks the spirit of a man who has schooled himself by the law of God, who knows how unworthy and sinful man's offerings at best must be, but who has learned also that praise and prayer, silent as well as vocal, form an acceptable sacrifice, when coming from a heart made pure, not so much by the cleansing law, as by the cleansing grace, of God.

PSALM XX. FOR THE KING GOING OUT TO BATTLE.

This and the following Psalm should be read together. The community, by the mouth of a sacred poet, prays for its king, now as he goes forth to battle, now as he returns triumphant. We

The name of the God of Jacob set thee up on high;
2 Send thee help from the sanctuary,
And strengthen thee out of Zion;
3 Remember all thy offerings,
And accept thy burnt sacrifice; [Selah

---

have not sufficient data to enable us to determine what particular king was first intended. It is not to be understood that David wrote these Psalms; but they may have been written in relation to him; their general tone and spirit indicates an early date. Delitzsch follows the Syriac Version in referring this Psalm to David's war against the Ammonites (see 2 Sam. x. 10 and xii. 26), and the Syrians who were allied with them and helped them with horses and chariots (cf. verse 7). Theodore of Mopsuestia refers the Psalm to Hezekiah: Asa and Uzziah have also been suggested. The attempt to refer the Psalm to the Maccabaean period, Simon being the 'king' in question, is surely forced and unnatural. The tone of the Psalm is strongly personal, hence a Messianic application has been given to it. It is, however, suitable in a sense as a prayer for all magistrates and men in high office (Luther), or for that church-kingdom of Christ, of which Israel was the type (Calvin).

The style of this short Psalm is vigorous, and its tone of confidence in God earnest and complete. It might well be arranged for antiphonal singing: in the first part (verses 1–5) the people join in prayer; then a single voice, of priest or Levite, is heard in response (verse 6), and this may, or may not, continue in verses 7 and 8; in modern music these would be sung in quartette, whilst in any case the last verse represents the whole congregation as joining in the chorus of God save the King!

1. The sacred **name** stands for the character of Jehovah as revealed in history.

God of Jacob takes us back to the patriarch's own life, as in Gen. xxxv. 3, 'the God who answered me in the day of my distress'; and xlviii. 15, 'the God who fed me all my life long unto this day'; but also to the history of his descendants who had often cried to God and been heard in the day of trouble.

set thee up on high reminds us that deliverance is sometimes described as being set at large from straits, sometimes as being lifted above the reach of foes.

2, 3. Prayer and sacrifice in the sanctuary are depended upon as giving a sacred character to the warfare and securing the blessing of Jehovah. So Samuel offered sacrifice before the war with the Philistines (1 Sam. vii. 10), and Jeremiah speaks of 'consecrating a war' (vi. 4).

accept literally means 'receive as fat,' the best part of the

Grant thee thy heart's desire, 4
And fulfil all thy counsel.
We will triumph in thy salvation, 5
And in the name of our God we will set up our banners:
The LORD fulfil all thy petitions.
Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; 6
He will answer him from his holy heaven
With the saving strength of his right hand.
Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: 7
But we will make mention of the name of the LORD our
God.

---

animal being consumed as an offering to God. Whether this be a mere pagan superstition, or a pious act of devotion, depends on the motives and the end of the warfare.

Selah perhaps indicates an interval during which music sounded and a part of the sacrificial service was conducted.

4. The end aimed at is not personal aggrandizement, hence the means adopted, the counsel, or plan of campaign, may be directed by God.

5. Render, 'That we may,' or 'So will we shout for joy,' over the deliverance we expect. The prayer is still continued, and finds its climax in the last clause of this verse.

6. Though there is no Selah, an interval evidently takes place between the last verse and this. **Now** shows that something has happened. The sacrifice is supposed to have been offered and, as sign of the Divine acceptance, has been consumed by the sacred flame. The *Azkarah* or memorial, the part which ascended in the holy fire, reminded the Deity of His suppliant.

saveth is a prophetic perfect. The victory is as if already won. 'A whisper may start an avalanche. The prayer of the people has set Omnipotence in motion.' (Maclaren.)

7. The word 'trust' is not expressed in the Hebrew, and either the verb 'make mention of' may be supplied from the next clause or the ellipsis filled up as in our versions. 'Horses and chariots' were formidable indeed to the Israelites, especially in the early days. They were bidden not to adopt this mode of warfare, as in Deut. xvii. 16 the king is not to 'multiply horses,' but rather to destroy those of the enemy. Compare the conflict with Jabin in Judges v, and with Assyria under Sennacherib.

The name of God is sufficient as the watchword of His people, and to 'make mention of' it implies the rallying of forces in His

8 They are bowed down and fallen:
But we are risen, and stand upright.
9 Save, Lord:
Let the King answer us when we call.

21 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord;
And in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

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strength and under His protection. This spirit has often welded ordinary soldiers into 'Ironsides.'

8. **They are bowed down,** &c. These words are uttered before the battle begins, in anticipation of the assured overthrow of the enemy.

9. Render, 'O Lord, save the king, and answer us when we call.' So LXX and Vulg. and many of the best modern commentators. Delitzsch, as well as A. V. and R. V., follows the Massoretic punctuation, **Let the King,** i. e. God, **answer us,** &c. This recognizes the true kingship of Jehovah, but it is not usual for the Psalmists to speak of Him as 'the King,' as if this were in itself a title of Deity. The refrain of the National Anthem is taken from the Vulgate rendering in this place, *Domine, salvum fac regem*, and it must be understood that in the original use 'save' means 'grant him victory.'

Psalm XXI. Thanksgiving for a Royal Victory.

A companion Psalm to the preceding, presenting points both of similarity and of contrast. Both Psalms contain prayer for a king, but here petition passes into triumph, and thanksgiving is offered for an apparently recent victory. The Psalm is suited for a coronation, and has been repeatedly used on such occasions, but the allusions in verses 3 and 4 do not imply that it was composed either for a coronation or a royal birthday. A traditional Jewish interpretation makes it a Messianic Psalm; the Targum reads 'King Messiah' in verses 1 and 7. It is clear that the king in the Psalm is closely identified with the cause of God, and is His representative on earth; thus the words lend themselves naturally to a Messianic application, as is seen by the use of the Psalm on Ascension Day. But there is no sufficient reason for thinking that this was originally intended by the Psalmist.

The former part of the Psalm, verses 1-7, is to be sung by the congregation, as an address to God; there follows a strophe verses 8-12, which forms an address to the king—it may be

Thou hast given him his heart's desire, 2
And hast not withholden the request of his lips. [Selah
For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: 3
Thou settest a crown of fine gold on his head.
He asked life of thee, thou gavest it him; 4
Even length of days for ever and ever.
His glory is great in thy salvation: 5
Honour and majesty dost thou lay upon him.
For thou makest him most blessed for ever: 6
Thou makest him glad with joy in thy presence.

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intoned by priest or Levite; while, as in Ps. xx, the Psalm closes with a united chant on the part of the whole congregation.

1, 2. The opening verses contain a special thanksgiving for recent deliverance. In the previous Psalm two things were asked for—that the strength of God should be manifested in the king and his army; and that thus deliverance and safety should come to the people. Now the community rejoices in both.

3. The Psalmist passes on to a more general statement of the gifts of God bestowed upon the king.

Render, 'For thou comest to meet him with the blessings of prosperity.' The word **goodness** is a literal translation, but in English seems to refer to the goodness of God, whereas it indicates the 'good things' (R. V. marg.) which the king had abundantly enjoyed. For 'prevent' see xviii. 5. The reference in the **crown of fine gold** is not to the king's coronation, nor to the recent victory; it must be understood as a general description of the royal dignity, as in verse 5.

4. Long life among the Jews signified the favour of God. This is the more intelligible when we remember how completely their religious thought was concentrated on the present life. The same idea is conveyed in **length of days for ever:** it may be understood either hyperbolically of the king's personal life, or of the long continuance of his dynasty, or both.

5. in thy salvation: i. e. through the victory thou hast wrought out for him.

6. *Lit.* 'makest him blessings.' Abraham in Gen. xii. 2 is to be blessed and made a blessing, and the plural is rightly translated **most blessed.** A proof of the Divine favour is admission to the Divine presence and a glimpse of the Divine face. So in our modern use, 'to countenance.'

7 For the king trusteth in the Lord,
And through the lovingkindness of the Most High he shall not be moved.
8 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies:
Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery furnace in the time of thine anger.
The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath,
And the fire shall devour them.
10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth,
And their seed from among the children of men.
11 For they intended evil against thee:
They imagined a device, which they are not able to perform.
12 For thou shalt make them turn their back,
Thou shalt make ready with thy bowstrings against the face of them.

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7. In verses 1–6 **thou** implies an address to God; in 8–12 **thou** refers to the king; this verse forms a transition between the two, both God and the king being spoken of in the third person. The trust is such as was exemplified in the last Psalm.

9. To make the enemy **as a fiery furnace** apparently means, 'as the fuel consumed in the furnace'; see lxxxiii. 14, where 'as the fire that burneth the forest' means, 'as the forest that is burned in the fire.' Render, 'in the time of thy wrathful presence.' The phrase is more appropriately understood of God Himself; i the king is intended, it must be as Divine vicegerent.

10. fruit: i. e. offspring; see cxxvii. 3, 'the fruit of the wom is his reward.'

11. Render:—

'Though they intend evil against thee,
Though they imagine a mischievous device,
They shall not prevail.'

12. thou shalt make ready, &c., means either, 'make read (the arrows) upon thy bowstrings,' or, 'aim with thy bowstring against their face.'

Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thy strength : 13
So will we sing and praise thy power.

For the Chief Musician ; set to Aijeleth hash-Shahar. A Psalm of David. 22

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 1

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13. The concluding verse is a kind of doxology, to be sung in general chorus. Ps. xx ends with united supplication, and this with united praise.

Psalm XXII. A Passion Psalm.

Of whom speaketh the Psalmist this? Of himself, or of some other? This is a question that has often been asked, and very various replies have been given. The preliminary question, Who is the Psalmist who speaks? cannot be definitely answered, and even if it could, the more important question of interpretation would remain. Delitzsch ascribes the Psalm to David when in the wilderness of Maon, others attribute it to Hezekiah, others to Jeremiah, whilst some Christian as well as Jewish interpreters attribute it to a sufferer of later days who personifies the exiled and oppressed Jewish nation. Cheyne, for instance, would look to the period of Nehemiah and find in the Psalm a description of 'the ideal Israelite,' the 'flower of Israel,' the genius of the nation 'in word and act, in life and in death, rivalling and surpassing the Israel and Moses of antiquity.' The period of the later Monarchy or that of the Exile is perhaps the most probable period for the composition of the Psalm, but the name of its author can never be known.

Much more important is the inquiry whether the writer was simply recording his own personal experience, or whether he wrote as representative of Israel, or whether in prophetic spirit he anticipated the redeeming work of the suffering Messiah. The use of the opening words made by our Lord upon the cross, and the close coincidence between the phraseology of verses 6–8 and 13–18 and Christ's sufferings before and during the crucifixion, have made this Psalm peculiarly sacred to Christians. Bishop Alexander, in his Bampton Lectures on 'The witness of the Psalms to Christ,' has written very impressively of the Psalm from this point of view, which is that of Cassiodorus—'not so much a prophecy as a history,' written beforehand of the pains through which the Man of Sorrows passed for the world's redemption. It would not, however, be sound or safe interpretation to rest much weight upon certain coincidences, touching and impressive as these are to the mind of the Christian believer.

Why art thou so far from helping me, *and from* the words of my roaring?

The view which is beginning to commend itself to a majority of critics—it is at least that of the present writer—is that actual personal experience is certainly to be found in the Psalm and forms its basis, but that the language in some places so far transcends these limits that it contains both a representative and prophetic significance. The primary illustration of the Psalmist's words is found in his own history, a wider in that of his suffering nation, whilst the full meaning of at least some verses can only be found in an event which lay beyond the writer's ken, but which 'the spirit of Christ that was in him did signify.' A fuller account of what is to be understood by 'Messianic' Psalms will be found in the Introduction to vol. ii of this work.

The Psalm divides naturally into two parts: verses 1–21 describing present sufferings and pleading for deliverance, while verses 22–31 contain a triumphant acknowledgement of Divine intervention and the widespread blessings which are to result from this signal proof of God's grace and the victory of the patient sufferer. More minutely, in the first part are eight strophes of two or three verses each, of which the first two are introductory, five describe the sufferer's woes, and the last, 19–21, contains an earnest prayer. The latter half contains two longer stanzas, 22–26 and 27–31, expressing thankfulness and joyful anticipation.

The most remarkable feature of the Psalm is the extent of the blessing contemplated through the sufferings of God's servant and the link of connexion suggested between the two parts. Not only are the godly in Israel and the whole nation to share in the spiritual benefit, but 'all the families of the nations' and generations yet to come. The connexion between the two parts of the Psalm hardly enables us to say confidently that the glory comes *through* the shame and sorrow, nor is the kind of connexion between the experiences of the individual and the effect upon whole nations made quite plain. But such a connexion there plainly is, though the writer has not dealt with the problem of the suffering of the righteous and the benefit conferred upon mankind as does the author of Job or the later Isaiah. The Psalm is several times quoted in the N. T. Besides the 'Eloi' of Matt. xxvii. 46, John xix. 24 claims the fulfilment in Christ of the words describing the partition of the garments, verse 18. The chief priests use verses 7 and 8 for their wicked taunts; verses 14–16 describe the pains of crucifixion; and Heb. ii. 12 expressly quotes verse 22 as if spoken by Christ of those whom He is not ashamed to call brethren.

The title **Aijeleth hash-Shahar,** 'The hind of the morning-

O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou answerest not; 2
And in the night season, and am not silent.
But thou art holy, 3
O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
Our fathers trusted in thee: 4
They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
They cried unto thee, and were delivered: 5
They trusted in thee, and were not ashamed.

---

dawn,' is to be understood as the name of a tune, without any of the mystical or symbolical significance which both Jewish and Christian interpreters have from time to time attached to it.

1. A plaintive question of appeal. The Psalmist cannot believe that He who is still 'my God' has in reality forsaken him, yet he is alone, helpless, apparently deserted. The poignancy of the complaint expressed in the original by four words only in each line is but imperfectly rendered in the twenty-four words of the English version. *Eloi* and *sabachthani* in the N.T. are Aramaic words, of which *Eli* and *azabtani* are the corresponding Hebrew. **Roaring** indicates the loud shriek of extreme pain.

2. Render, 'in the night season, but find no rest' (R.V. marg.), i.e. obtain no answer. This rendering preserves the parallelism, and is less tame than R.V. **and am not silent.**

3-5. The second strophe begins here, and contains the ground of the appeal made to God, as One who might be expected to hear and answer the sufferer. Render:—

> 'And yet—thou art holy,
> Thou that art enthroned on the praises of Israel.'

The bold and beautiful figure of the latter clause contains a spiritual adaptation of the phrase 'sitteth between the cherubim,' 1 Sam. iv. 4. **Praises** is understood by Perowne to mean the many acts of deliverance and redemption which had called forth praise, but a simpler and better explanation finds in the word those bright clouds of thanksgiving offered by His people, above which God sits enthroned; just as elsewhere their prayers are represented as clouds of incense rising in His presence.

The meaning of the appeal of course is, that the very righteousness and purity, the faithfulness and truth of the Divine character, as shown by those manifestations to Israel which have called forth repeated praises, constitutes a reason for this expostulation on the part of the righteous sufferer.

In verses 4 and 5 emphasize 'thee' throughout; 'In thee did

6 But I am a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,
8 Commit *thyself* unto the LORD; let him deliver him:
Let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him.
9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb:
Thou didst make me trust *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.
10 I was cast upon thee from the womb:
Thou art my God from my mother's belly.
11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.

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our fathers trust: unto thee did they cry.' They found deliverance, whereas the Psalmist trusts and cries, but no help comes.

6-8. worm represents an object of contempt, one who is helpless to resent or resist. It is used in Isa. xli. 14; and the phrase **no man** recalls the strong expressions of Isa. lii. 14. The scorn of enemies here takes its worst form, that of sneering at the sufferer's piety and trust in a God who seems to care nothing for him.

The perfect tense given in R. V. marg. of verse 8, 'He trusted in God,' is adopted in the N. T., Matt. xxvii. 43, and in the versions. But R. V. is correct, and this rendering makes the taunt still more bitter, *lit.* 'Roll it on Jehovah!' Kirkpatrick compares Wisd. of Sol. ii. 16-20, where despitefulness, torture, and a shameful death are to be inflicted upon the righteous man, to see if he is indeed God's son and if God will uphold and deliver him from his adversaries. The experience has been repeated from the time of Joseph onwards, but the passage referred to forms one of the most striking parallels to this Psalm.

9-11. Render, 'Yea, but thou art he who.' The Psalmist takes the taunt out of the lips of his adversaries, and pleads that as God has delighted in him and shown him mercy from infancy onwards, He should not forsake him now. In verse 10 translate:—

'Upon thee was I cast from my birth:
From my mother's womb thou art my God.'

Hence with confidence the Psalmist can plead, Be not far when trouble is near; thou art near, show thyself, O my God!

Many bulls have compassed me: 12
Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
They gape upon me with their mouth, 13
As a ravening and a roaring lion.
I am poured out like water, 14
And all my bones are out of joint:
My heart is like wax;
It is melted in the midst of my bowels.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd; 15
And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.
For dogs have compassed me: 16
The assembly of evil-doers have inclosed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.

12, 13. Brute strength, insolence, irritability are represented by the figure of the wild bulls, who gather and stare and bellow, and are ready to gore their victim. Bashan was famous for its oak forests, rich pastures, and breeds of cattle. See Amos iv. 1. The bulls become lions in the last clause.

14, 15. Contrast the weakness and helplessness of the sufferer who is now at the last gasp. The physical effects of his trouble are graphically described. He is worn to a skeleton, his vital strength is relaxed, dissolved; he is in constant pain and his whole body parched with fever. Render in the last line, 'Thou art laying me in the dust of death.' For the Jew could never think of anything as happening without God.

16–18. He passes back again from himself to his foes. They are like a pack of savage dogs, such as scour all oriental cities—more like wolves than the dogs we know and cherish—a surly, snarling, scavenger tribe, who devour where they can and worry all that are helpless enough to be their prey.

Such are the evil-doers who gather round him. In the latter clause of verse 16 the present Hebrew text reads, 'Like a lion,' which, as it is, cannot stand. The Revisers' marginal note explains that their text follows the versions in rendering, **They pierced.** The Targum combines the two in its paraphrase, 'Biting like a lion.' In verse 17 render, 'I can number all my bones, while these—they gaze and stare upon me.' The words that follow, concerning the parting of the garments, are proverbial of brigands who seize and spoil a traveller, stripping him often to the skin

17 I may tell all my bones;
They look and stare upon me:
18 They part my garments among them,
And upon my vesture do they cast lots.
19 But be not thou far off, O Lord:
O thou my succour, haste thee to help me.
20 Deliver my soul from the sword;
My darling from the power of the dog.
21 Save me from the lion's mouth;
Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me.

22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren:
In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

---

and roughly dividing his property amongst them. They are not to be understood literally in the Psalmist's case, any more than other expressions in this highly-wrought description. The quotation in John xix. 24 is most appropriate and touching, even if the 'fulfilment' of prophecy be not very literally pressed.

19-21. be not thou far off: repeated from verse 11; nothing matters, if *thou* be near. The phrase **my darling**, *lit.* 'my only one,' is to be understood as synonymous with 'my soul' in the parallel clause. Nothing is so precious as life, for which a man will give all he has, Job ii. 4; compare our own phrase, 'dear life.'

Some printing device is almost necessary to bring out the full force of the last word in verse 21. **From the horns of the wild-oxen thou——hast answered me!** For this is the one thing which through the previous long and agonizing description has been wanting, and the word flashes forth with the brilliance and the unexpectedness of lightning. He who has been so long silent has spoken at last!

22. This is the single note of preparation given for an otherwise most abrupt transition from the depths of despair to the summit of joy. We have already noted, however, somewhat similar changes in Pss. vi. 2 and xx. 7, and they are not infrequent in the Psalter.

This verse gives the Psalmist's response to God's manifestation of Himself in mercy. He will publicly acknowledge his great Deliverer, and far and wide shall the effect of this salvation be heard and felt. The personal element is marked here; this verse could not be understood of a community. The quotation of the verse in Heb. ii. 12 shows that the writer of the epistle and his

Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; 23
All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him;
And stand in awe of him, all ye the seed of Israel.
For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of 24
the afflicted;
Neither hath he hid his face from him;
But when he cried unto him, he heard.
Of thee cometh my praise in the great congregation: 25
I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
The meek shall eat and be satisfied: 26
They shall praise the LORD that seek after him:
Let your heart live for ever.

---

readers were quite prepared to find in the words of the Psalm the experiences of a greater than David or of any sufferer under the old covenant.

23. Here begins a description of the effect which will be produced. The Psalmist begins with the inner circle of the truly pious in Israel, passing on to the nation at large, then to other nations, then to generations yet to come.

24. The tendency of primitive human nature is to despise and neglect the suffering, or even to regard their affliction as a mark of Divine anger. This is shown in Job and Isaiah and elsewhere in the O. T. This Psalm gives another view of pain, and God's pity towards the righteous sufferer, though the writer has not worked out, perhaps had not thought out, his own suggestion. God's pity is beyond man's, and it is His will to bring good out of evil.

25. Of here is ambiguous: render, 'From thee cometh my praise.' The statement of A. V., 'my praise shall be of thee,' is true in itself, but it is not the thought of this verse, which represents God as the source, as He is assuredly the end, of praise.

The phraseology of this and other verses seems to imply that the temple is standing and its services are being carried on.

26. A sacred meal, such as was usual in connexion with the offering of certain sacrifices, e. g. the peace offerings in Lev. vii. 15, 16. The eating in this case is not for the satisfaction of bodily hunger, nor is it a mere piece of ceremonial, but a solemn eucharistic meal in which especially the 'humble' or 'meek' should join. It implies a happy gathering of the faithful ones, Abdiels constant, but not solitary in their constancy, under the weight of severe

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto
the LORD:
And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before
thee.
28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S:
And he is the ruler over the nations.
29 All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and worship:
All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him,
Even he that cannot keep his soul alive.
30 A seed shall serve him;
It shall be told of the Lord unto the *next* generation.

---

oppression. Those who have been hungry are refreshed; those who have been seeking find; those who have wellnigh fainted revive, and their 'hearts live for ever.'

The same thought of a meal after a sacrifice is preserved in the Christian Communion Service.

27. The circle widens, the nations are gathered in. These are said to remember and turn to the Lord; **remember** is not to be understood literally, though as Paul shows in Rom. i, the nations had a knowledge of God, but lost it through forgetfulness. Here the word may be understood more generally, in the sense of 'take heed.' The Psalmist sees in anticipation the promise made to Abraham (Gen. xii. 3) fulfilled.

28. It is God's right to rule, but the rebellious need to be reconciled and subdued. The remarkable feature of the Psalm is that it gives a passing glimpse of the way in which this is to be brought about through a righteous Sufferer.

29. As 'meekness' is a moral quality associated with poverty, so with the 'fatness' of prosperity there is constantly associated in the Psalms a character of pride and arrogance. This verse describes prophetically the homage to be paid to Jehovah by the haughty oppressor.

The latter part of the verse, **Even he that cannot keep his soul alive,** is difficult. Some think it refers to the poor and needy, who, as well as the rich and prosperous, are to join in worship. But the latter two lines of this verse may emphasize the thought of Ps. xlix, that even the wealthy and strong must 'go down to the dust' and 'cannot keep their souls alive,' and must bow in submission to God. The LXX and some modern interpreters join the last clause of this verse with the next.

30. The **seed** mentioned here refers to the generation then

They shall come and shall declare his righteousness 31
Unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done it.

A Psalm of David. **23**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 1

---

living, the latter clause of this verse to the next following, while the last verse points to others yet to come.

31. that he hath done it: a statement impressive in its very vagueness. Done what? The deliverance of this sufferer, however notable and significant, is only an indication of a greater work which is not specified, a Divine purpose of salvation only hinted at. The new song which will be sung by coming generations cannot as yet be conceived, as the Divine work of bringing glory through suffering and accomplishing salvation through pain and sorrow is seen but dimly by the light of this Psalm. Yet it sheds a light of its own, and, as Prof. Kirkpatrick says, 'It is a parable of the history of the individual, of Israel, of the Church, of the world.'

PSALM XXIII. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

The charm of this Psalm of Psalms lies in its combined simplicity of diction, beauty of conception, and wealth of religious significance. These are blended with an art that is beyond art, attainable only by the trustful human spirit guided by the Divine. The chief figure in the picture, that of the shepherd, is one which appeals to all ages and all nations, though it suggests itself most naturally to dwellers in the pastoral countries of the East. The secondary metaphor in verse 5, that of the host at the banquet of life, must not be slighted, though it is inevitably thrown into the background by the superior beauty and suggestiveness of the primary thought. The meaning and helpfulness of this perfect little Psalm can never be exhausted so long as men, like sheep, wander and need guidance, and so long as they learn to find it in God their Shepherd.

The Psalm is inseparably associated with the name of David, whose early experiences may well have given rise in later life to thoughts such as these. But no youth could write it, and many modern commentators refuse to believe that it belongs to the youth of a nation. A long experience lies behind it, of need and trouble, as well as of comfort and help. The fashion prevailing in some quarters of understanding the 'I' of this Psalm as the community of Israel robs it of a large portion of its meaning, though the idea of Jehovah as Shepherd of Israel obtains in the Asaphic Psalms—compare lxxx. 1 and lxxvii. 20—and in certain passages of the prophets. But the tenderly personal note must not be lost from the music of this Psalm, whilst the flock of the

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his
name's sake.

Church in all ages may gain from it their own meed of encouragement and comfort. The use of the Psalm by the saints of all generations, and the almost innumerable metrical renderings and paraphrases it has received in various languages, need only be mentioned to show its value.

1. In the O. T. the shepherd is essentially the ruler. David is appointed to 'feed' God's people, 2 Sam. vii. 7, and a greater David in Ezek. xxxiv. 23 is a shepherd also. Whilst the tenderness of the figure suggested by the close personal care of the shepherd over his sheep is not to be forgotten, the wisdom and strength and authority of the true Leader of men is its prominent element. So when Christ claimed to be the Good Shepherd, whilst declaring his readiness to lay down his life for the sheep, he laid stress upon his authority.

Only when Jehovah is their Shepherd can men dream of saying, **I shall not want.** The P.B.V., 'Therefore can I lack nothing,' reminds of the promise concerning Canaan in Deut. viii. 9, which Moses claims to have been fulfilled even in the wilderness, 'Thou hast lacked nothing,' Deut. ii. 7.

2. The Psalmist follows the flock through varied scenes. In the heat of the day they rest in cool green meadows—'where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon,' Canticles i. 7—by the water-courses which nourish the grass, and near which are the natural resting-places for man and beast. Render, 'And by the still waters he doth guide me.' *Menuchah*, a resting-place, was what Israel sought in the wilderness, and was to find in the Promised Land. They sought it for many a long day after entering Canaan, but Joshua did not give it to them, and when Ps. xcv was written they had not found it. This Psalmist, however, with all who believe, had 'entered into rest.'

3. He restoreth, not brings back as a wanderer from the right path, but revives the weary and fainting who need refreshment. Compare xix. 7.

The phrase **paths of righteousness** does not mean 'straight paths,' but retains its moral meaning. The natural and the spiritual, the symbol and the thing symbolized, are blended in the Psalm, as usually in Hebrew poetry. **For his name's sake** God does many things; that He may be true to His own character, and because He cannot deny Himself. He guards and helps His people for

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of 4
death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me:
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of 5
mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth
over.

---

their own sakes; but they have a stronger security to rely upon than anything earthly can give, in God's fidelity to His own immutable nature and purpose.

4. The word *tsalmaveth*, translated **valley of the shadow of death,** is only in appearance derived from the word 'death'; etymologically it means no more than R. V. marg. 'deep gloom.' The familiar rendering, however, is not only picturesque, but has interwoven itself into our language; none the less it is somewhat to be regretted that the narrower meaning which associates the gloomy and dangerous ravine with death should exclusively prevail, and it would be well to keep as an alternative translation, 'the valley of the dark shadow.'

The **rod and staff** are sometimes regarded as two names for one object, used for different purposes. The more natural meaning of the double phrase is, however, the more correct. The shepherd carries both a *shēbet*, a kind of club or mace slung by the side and used as an offensive weapon when needed, and a *mish'eneth*, a long straight pole carried in the hand and used for climbing, for support, and for helping the sheep in various ways. Render:—

'Thy rod and thy staff—they will comfort me!'

5. Much is gained, even from the point of view of art, by this additional figure to describe God's goodness and man's ground of trust and confidence. Provision for needs, festive rejoicing, the bestowment of dignity, abounding grace more than sufficient for all contingencies—such are the suggestions of this verse, in which the Psalmist is a guest at the banquet of life, with Jehovah for a bountiful Host. Fresh and fragrant oil, freely used in the East as a cosmetic, is associated always with festal occasions, and the neglect to provide it is somewhat of a slight on the part of a host who is entertaining guests, see Luke vii. 46. The last clause runs literally, 'My cup—abundance!'

Enemies lurk in the background. As the sheep will have sooner or later to pass through the dark and perilous glen, so the guest at the feast sees dimly visible beyond the lamps and the silver

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

24 A Psalm of David.

1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.

---

cups faces of foes full of hatred and threatening of aspect. But he fears them not. In the world, tribulation: in Me, peace.

6. The last verse shows how assured is the confidence of one of the guests in God's house. The opening word is sometimes affirmative, as in R. V. text **Surely,** sometimes restrictive, as in marg. 'Only.' It might be paraphrased, 'This one thing remains true, that' **goodness**—that is, the provision of all good things needed, and **mercy**—that is, the bestowal of far more than is deserved, are to be two guardian angels all through the Psalmist's life, inasmuch as all his course will only be a dwelling in one or other of the many mansions of the Great King. There is no direct allusion to a future life in the words **for ever,** neither is there any exclusion of the thought. Those who have learned the lessons of the N. T. are assured that all who are under the guidance of the Good Shepherd and in the care of the Divine Host now will be His 'for length of days' (R.V. marg.), when days and nights are known no more.

PSALM XXIV. THE PALACE OF THE KING OF GLORY.

Shortly after the famous stronghold of Zion had been taken from the Jebusites David brought into that which came to be known as 'the city of David' the Ark of the Covenant which had been resting in the house of Obed-edom. It was an occasion of great rejoicing, partly national, partly religious. 1 Chron. xv gives an account of the event as it loomed in the eyes of later generations across the gulf of many centuries: this Psalm was in all probability composed for the solemn and glorious occasion. It is worthy of even such high use. Its tone throughout is stately and majestic, while its poetical fire, its high ethical standard, and its concentrated force in celebrating the glory of the only abiding King, combine to distinguish it as one of the noblest of the Psalms.

It has been described as one, and one it is in its present form, whatever its history. It is not surprising, however, that in an age of analysis the two parts of which it obviously consists should be regarded as originally separate compositions. Verses 7–10 are viewed by many as the whole or a fragment of an ancient hymn

For he hath founded it upon the seas, 2
And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? 3

---

to which some later writer has given a not inappropriate setting. It may be so. The transition from verse 6 to 7 is certainly abrupt, and it marks a change of metre as well as of style. Hence, as in xix, two pens may have been at work. On the other hand, abrupt transitions are not infrequent in the Psalter, and the mark of a later age is not impressed on verses 1–6 as on xix. 7–14. But Delitzsch is much better assured of the unity of Ps. **xix** than of this. Interpreters are naturally divided upon a point in deciding which subjective considerations so largely prevail.

The Psalm gains every way if it be read as it would be antiphonally rendered by a choir. See Stanley, *Jewish Church*, ii. 72. Verses 1 and 2 would form a chorus sung by the procession as it was winding up the hill towards the gates of the ancient fortress. One voice, or group of voices, asks the question in verse 3, answered by others in 4 and 5, whilst all join together in chanting verse 6. As the throng gathers at the entrance of the citadel, some of the priests and Levites have entered to take possession in the name of the Lord. A single voice, or one part of the choir, sounds out the summons of verse 7: 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and the King of glory shall come in,' while the warders from within challenge in return, 'Who is the King of glory?' A triumphant answer echoes back from the multitude outside, 'Yahweh Sabaoth, He is King of glory.' Again the summons, the challenge, and the overmastering shout in reply; then the venerable portal is entered, and the city henceforth is hallowed as the dwelling-place of the great King.

The Psalm is used in the Greek Church at the festival attending a church dedication, and in the Church of England on Ascension Day.

1, 2. The sovereignty of the whole earth belongs to Him who made it. The Hebrew emphasizes not 'earth' and 'world,' but Jehovah. Render therefore, 'Jehovah's is the earth and the fulness thereof . . . For it is He who hath founded it,' &c. The word translated 'world' means the habitable earth, with special reference to human life: 'fulness' means all that fills it, as P.B.V. 'all that therein is' **he hath founded it upon the seas,** &c. To whom should it belong but to its Creator? The idea of the world resting upon the waters is poetical in form, but it fairly represents popular Hebrew ideas, see Gen. i. 6, vii. 11; Ps. cxxxvi. 6, and the well-known phrase of the second commandment, 'the water under the earth.'

3, 4. Who shall ascend, &c. These questions have already been

And who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6 This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, O *God of* Jacob. [Selah

asked in Ps. xv, but they are closely connected here with the context, both before and after. The God of the whole earth may not be lightly approached, yet entrance is shortly to be sought into that holy dwelling-place of His, symbolized by the establishing of the sacred ark upon Mount Zion. Most appropriately therefore is again the question asked, Who may be a guest of the Most High God?

The answer is in substance the same as that given in Ps. xv, and reaffirms the high ethical character of the Jewish religion. But the phraseology here is somewhat more general and more spiritual than in the earlier Psalm; character and actions alike are to be pure in both cases, but the stress lies in the earlier Psalm upon acts, as here upon character.

Four clauses describe the needful characteristics: the first, **He that hath clean hands,** refers to actions, chiefly of violence and dishonesty; the last, to words of fraud and perjury. The two middle phrases refer to inward purity, to desires and motives such as the outward law cannot touch. To 'lift up the soul unto vanity,' means to allow the affections to go forth to that which is empty, useless, transitory and therefore evil, as compared with devotion to the Eternal and Most Holy God. Some find a reference here to idolatry: doubtless the actual worship of idols was a glaring instance of what is here condemned, but the comprehensive description of this clause includes more than overt apostasy from Jehovah.

5, 6. Righteousness is both a condition and result of blessing. A man must cleanse himself so far as in him lies before God will receive him: then the blessing bestowed consists mainly in the power given to attain a deeper and more abiding purity. It is natural to compare the fourth beatitude: those who hunger for righteousness are satisfied with its fullness.

Render, 'Such is the generation,' &c., the idiomatic rendering of the Hebrew **This.** These words recall the sixth beatitude; as those who love purity shall see God, so those who desire to see the face of God shall be cleansed indeed. There is no very

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; 7
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is the King of glory? 8
The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; 9
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory? 10
The LORD of hosts,
He is the King of glory. [Selah

---

marked distinction between the synonyms *darash*, **seek after,** and *biqqesh*, **seek:** though the latter implies rather the inquiry of one who does not know, and the former the pursuit of one who knows and desires to attain.

In the last clause of verse 6, A. V. follows the Hebrew, 'O Jacob'; but the meaning of the received text must be, 'These are they who seek thy face, even Jacob,' i. e. these are the true Israel. This is very unsatisfactory, and R. V. is unquestionably right in reading with the chief versions, 'O God of Jacob.'

7, 8. A bold apostrophe. The hoary gates of the old heathen fortress are represented as unwilling to receive the conquering Lord, or the highest of them is too low for His standard to pass under. They are to bow themselves down, or lift themselves up, to make themselves higher and wider—in every way to make room for Him who comes to reign in Jerusalem. Render, with R. V. marg., 'Ye ancient doors,' *lit.* 'gates of old,' whose history stretches into the past, far and dim; the word **everlasting,** though used in permissible hyperbole, carries with it other associations.

King of glory: i. e. the king who is glorious, who does glorious things and who rules over a glorious kingdom.

The warders at the gates ask for the credentials of those who boldly throw down this challenge. What is the name, what the claim to authority of him who seeks to enter? The answer first given is that Yahweh, who is a 'mighty hero,' has already proved His strength in granting victory to His servant David and has come to claim His own.

9, 10. These verses repeat the former colloquy, with one marked variation. The name *Yahweh Tsebaoth*, **LORD of hosts,**

25 *A Psalm* of David.

1 Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, in thee have I trusted,

---

meets us here for the first time. The subject of the names of God is briefly discussed in a detached note, p. 358, and more fully in the Introd. to vol. ii of this work. Here it may be said that the connotation of this high title varies somewhat with the context, the emphasis lying sometimes upon God's power on earth, sometimes on His majesty as Ruler of the hosts of heaven. The fuller and probably the original form is Yahweh, God of Hosts, but whether angels or stars or armies of men be more particularly thought of, this name of God designates Him as All-Sovereign, Ruler of created being. Hence the Greek translation, Ruler of all; compare the opening phrase of the Apostles' Creed, 'God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.'

There is therefore a distinct addition made in this verse to the claims of the Conqueror who is about to enter—symbolically, through the presence of the ark—into that stronghold of Zion, which is henceforth to be known not as the city of David, but as the city of the great King. 'This is my resting place for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it' (Ps. cxxxii. 14).

Psalm XXV. An Alphabet of Devout Prayers.

This Psalm is an acrostic, somewhat irregularly constructed. The rule that each verse of two lines should begin with a letter of the alphabet is broken at the second verse—though this could easily be remedied by a slight rearrangement of words—also at the *Vav* verse, where again a slight reconstruction could easily be made. The letter *Qoph* is wanting to verse 18 where it would be expected, and two succeeding verses begin with *Resh*, while an additional verse beginning with *Pe* is found at the end, afte the scheme is complete. It is curious, in comparing the alphabetical Psalms, to find the same dropping of *Vav* in Ps. xxxiv, somewhat similar confusion in the case of *Qoph* and *Resh* i Pss. ix, x and xxxvii, and a similarly appended *Pe* verse in Ps. xxxiv Attempts have been made to explain these irregularities. Dr. Kin thinks that in the earlier of the alphabetical Psalms the order o the letters was not altogether fixed as we have it now, while th appended verses in this Psalm and Ps. xxxiv have been viewed a liturgical additions, giving a hint of the author's name, Pedaliah beginning with the superfluous letter! It is clearly establishe that xxv and xxxiv are companion Psalms, probably by the sam author. Further than this it is impossible to go at present. Th conjectures that are being made on this subject as tentati

Let me not be ashamed;
Let not mine enemies triumph over me.
Yea, none that wait on thee shall be ashamed: 3

---

hypotheses may lead to some assured result, but as yet they have not done so.

In substance, the Psalm is meditative, humble, prayerful. Praise predominates in its companion, Ps. xxxiv. No distinct order of thought can be traced out, nor can this be expected in an acrostic, though some think that the Psalm begins (1–7) with prayer and ends with it (15–21), while meditation predominates between (8–14). Dr. King considers that the Psalm was originally written in two halves, like the acrostic in Pss. cxi and cxii, on a scale of ten letters, the number of the Covenant, and that in this Psalm the former half refers directly to God, the latter deals with the duty of man to man. But these attempts, while interesting in themselves, tend, like those of the Hebrew metrists, to over-systematization.

There is nothing definite in the Psalm to indicate date. If the last verse be not a liturgical addition, it points to the period of the Exile. The Psalm can hardly be earlier than the time of the later Monarchy, and we shall probably not be far wrong if, with Ewald, we find in it the reflections and pleadings of an exile in Babylon who has already partly learned the lessons God was teaching His people, of resignation and trust.

1. The best security against 'lifting up the soul to vanity' (xxiv. 4) is to raise it perpetually Godward in aspiration and prayer.

> 'It is to Thee, Jehovah, that I lift my soul.'

This opening key-note of the Psalm is well preserved throughout. Whether the Psalmist is praying or pondering, he is setting his affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

The first verse is short of a line, according to the scheme of composition, and it has been proposed to relieve verse 5 of a redundant line, and remove—with some MSS. of the LXX—the exclamation 'O my God' from the second verse, where it disturbs the alphabetic regularity. The latter half of this verse would then read—

> 'For Thee, O my God, do I wait all the day.'

2. This verse would open with the letter *Beth*, **in thee have I trusted,** &c. The enemies in this case have the upper hand, and the danger is lest the pious and lawful hopes of the truly devout should be overthrown and the godly as such be put to shame. Against this the Psalmist prays.

3. Here he reassures his own soul. It cannot be that he and those who with him wait on Jehovah should be disappointed and

They shall be ashamed that deal treacherously without
cause.
4 Shew me thy ways, O Lord;
Teach me thy paths.
5 Guide me in thy truth, and teach me;
For thou art the God of my salvation;
On thee do I wait all the day.
6 Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses;
For they have been ever of old.
7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions:
According to thy lovingkindness remember thou me,
For thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

---

overthrown. For it is not a personal question, the sore trouble with him is in relation to those who **deal treacherously,** who are traitors to God and faithless to their fellow men, and who act thus **without cause,** lightly and wantonly disregarding the most sacred ties—it is these who shall surely incur the confusion they would fain inflict on others.

4. Shew me thy ways, &c. The Psalmist now illustrates what is meant by waiting on God and lifting the soul to Him. He asks that he may know more fully and walk more steadily in God's ways—i. e. understand the Divine meaning and purposes in the events of his own life and those happening around him, so that he may order his own conduct accordingly.

5. Guide me in thy truth seems to anticipate the promises concerning the Holy Spirit (John xvi. 13; compare xvii. 17); but the emphasis in the O. T. lies upon conduct rather than knowledge, and the Psalmist's appeal is rather that God, in the exercise of that 'faithfulness and truth' which belongs to Him, would give the practical guidance which is needed in difficulty. This is borne out by the parallel phrase, **God of my salvation.**

If the last line of this verse is not transferred to complete verse 1, we may suppose that a clause has been lost from the text which would furnish a *Vav* verse in its own place.

6. The appeal to past history is common in the Psalms and prophets, especially about the time of the Exile in Babylon.

7. If the time and circumstances of composition be as suggested, the Psalmist will throughout be thinking of the community as

Good and upright is the LORD: 8
Therefore will he instruct sinners in the way.
The meek will he guide in judgement: 9
And the meek will he teach his way.
All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth 10
Unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
For thy name's sake, O LORD, 11
Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.
What man is he that feareth the LORD? 12
Him shall he instruct in the way that he shall choose.

---

well as of himself: this is shown by verse 22. Hence this confession of sin is more than personal. The tenderness and contrition of spirit, which make this reference to the **sins of my youth** very touching, includes a sense of national frailty and error such as at one time Israel was far from showing.

8-10. 'Mercy and goodness' are the attributes on which the sinner relies for pardon, as in the last verse; here goodness is joined with uprightness, as it is remembered that the offender needs instruction and discipline, that he may reform and walk in the right way. But only **the meek**—those who have learned the lessons of affliction and are humbly willing to learn—can be so taught and guided. **Judgement** means the principle of right carried out in practice. It is characteristic of God, but may be learned by man in his measure. The close connexion between God's ways and man's effort is brought out in the tenth verse. If man will faithfully keep His covenant, he will find that the events of life are ordered for him in mercy and truth, or kindness and fidelity.

11. A further confession, probably to be viewed as national. The greatness of the iniquity makes the sinner to feel more deeply the direness of his need. All sins, even the more venial, need pardon, but some of these, so far from driving a man to God in despair, are hardly felt to be sins at all. None the less, it argues great faith in God for a great sinner to go to Him for forgiveness. The callous offender feels that his repeated transgressions have shut him out from mercy; the contrite and trustful prays, **Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.**

12. in the way that he shall choose: i. e. God will teach the man how to walk in that right way, which through grace he has learned to prefer and make his own. The good man's service of God is perfect freedom, he chooses the path willingly and gladly, but needs instruction. The Psalmist says he shall not lack it.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease;
And his seed shall inherit the land.
14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him;
And he will shew them his covenant.
15 Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD;
For he shall pluck my feet out of the net.
16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me;
For I am desolate and afflicted.
17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged:
O bring thou me out of my distresses.

---

13. Material prosperity is intended here, according to the often repeated promises of the old covenant. Compare especially the teaching of the Book of Proverbs.

14. Compare again Prov. iii. 32, 'His secret is with the righteous.' Such a phrase by itself—and it is by no means solitary—is sufficient to show that the writers in Proverbs were not, as is sometimes said, wholly occupied with the good things of this life and actuated by utilitarian motives. The intimate fellowship implied by the striking phrase 'the secret of Jehovah' is amongst the loftiest and purest blessings of the old and new covenants. Abraham was not the only friend of God, nor Enoch the only one who walked with Him.

15. In the section following the Psalmist turns again to prayer, and he begins by a description of his attitude of soul—mine eyes are 'toward Jehovah.' Sometimes the eyes should be fixed upon the pathway to avoid pitfalls and entanglements; but when a man is hopelessly ensnared he looks up to God for deliverance.

16. Turn thee unto me, &c. Everything for the Psalmist depends on whether God's face is turned towards him or away from him. The outline of the landscape may not be altered, but how do its features and aspect change when from the midst of grey and lowering clouds the sunshine breaks through and the azure of heaven appears!

17. Critics with one consent find the need of a change in the text here. The English reader understands by troubles being 'enlarged' that they are increased and multiplied. The Hebrew cannot mean this, and R. V. marg. indicates the way in which a change may be made with very slight alteration of the letters:—

'The straits of my heart do thou enlarge,
And bring me forth from my distresses.'

Consider mine affliction and my travail; 18
And forgive all my sins.
Consider mine enemies, for they are many; 19
And they hate me with cruel hatred.
O keep my soul, and deliver me: 20
Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.
Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, 21
For I wait on thee.
Redeem Israel, O God, 22
Out of all his troubles.

A Psalm of David. **26**

Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity: 1

---

18. The missing letter *Qoph* might be restored here by inserting 'Draw near' (Ewald), 'Arise' (Baur), or by changing the word translated 'Consider.' It is hardly likely that two verses would begin with the same word.

19. cruel, or perhaps better, 'violent hatred,' means 'hatred which proceeds from injustice and leads to fresh injustice.' (Delitzsch.)

20. Preserve here, as elsewhere, the characteristic phrase, 'in thee have I taken refuge.' The general phrase, **I put my trust,** is not close and definite enough.

21. Without misgiving can the Psalmist who asked for the pardon of his 'great' iniquity plead, as a reason why he should be heard, his **integrity and uprightness**, and ask that these qualities may still be his protection. Partly because he does not mean by them perfection of character, but only an honest determination to do right; partly because even this excellence is not so much his own as derived from God, **For I wait on thee.**

22. A most fitting close to the Psalm if written by an exile; a most suitable liturgical addition if appended to an earlier Psalm in order to make of it a litany for present needs. The use of the name *Elohim*, rather than the *Yahweh* which is characteristic of the first Book of Psalms, as well as the alphabetical anomaly mentioned above, may indicate that this verse was a later addition. But the prayer admirably harmonizes with the whole spirit of the Psalm, and sums up its petitions.

Psalm XXVI. The Plea of the Upright.

No indications of date are found in this Psalm to enable us to fix the circumstances of its composition. It is in all probability

I have trusted also in the LORD without wavering.
2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me ;
Try my reins and my heart.

---

much later than the time of David. It implies the temple-worship, verse 6, and a sharp division between the godly and the ungodly. The former are clearly in the minority, and the speaker is not a man in authority, verses 9 and 10. Some interpreters (Ewald) find in Pss. xxvi and xxviii references to 'a severe calamity, perhaps a pestilence, sweeping away many human beings,' and from this the Psalmist prays to be delivered. Others (Baethgen) judge that no personal or national event of any kind is referred to, but that the Psalm was composed as a general one, suitable to any pious worshipper in the temple at any time. The truth lies, perhaps, somewhere between these conjectures. The state of society is such that the righteous man is more or less in danger, and he prays with a continual side-glance at gatherings of evil-doers who would gladly do him a mischief; but no special calamity seems to be imminent. We agree with those who would place the Psalm in the prophetic rather than the post-Exilic period.

It may be divided into two parts : 1–7 a protest, 8–12 a prayer. But prayer is contained in the former part and protest in the latter ; and a more minute subdivision would find in 1–3 an opening plea ; 4–8 a strong self-vindication, and 9–12 a closing petition for deliverance, with its answer.

1. The prayer, 'Judge me, Jehovah,' asks that God would vindicate before the world that righteousness of character and conduct which the Psalmist is conscious of having preserved under circumstances of no small difficulty.

integrity aptly describes the prevailing feature of character which he claims for himself—whole-hearted sincerity of purpose in serving God. The writer does not claim to be sinless ; he does claim to be sharply distinguished by the simplicity and earnestness of his devotion from the evil-doers around him, the whole object of whose lives is entirely different from his.

2. That the Psalmist is not guilty of Pharisaic self-righteousness is made clear by two considerations : first, the entire trust in God as his strength expressed in the first verse ; secondly, the frank and confident prayer of this verse that God would search his motives through and through. Two kinds of testing or purifying of metal are here referred to ; and two parts of man's nature, the **reins** as standing for the affections and desires, the **heart** for the centre of conscious action, the thought which plans and the will which resolves and executes.

For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes; 3
And I have walked in thy truth.
I have not sat with vain persons; 4
Neither will I go in with dissemblers.
I hate the congregation of evil-doers, 5
And will not sit with the wicked.
I will wash mine hands in innocency; 6
So will I compass thine altar, O LORD:
That I may make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard, 7

---

3. The two safeguards which have kept God's servant from falling into evil—God's **lovingkindness** towards the weak and erring, and his 'faithfulness' in adhering to His word and maintaining His truth.

4. The body of the protestation consists of two parts, marked by past and future tenses, **I have not sat,** 'I will not go.' The Psalmist declares what he has not done, and what he is steadfastly purposed to do. If past and future are thus clear, so far as in him lies, he may well claim God's vindication in the present. 'Vanity,' says Delitzsch, means 'the chaotic emptiness of alienation from God.' It is part of the deep-seated morality of Hebrew thought that wickedness implies unreality: the man who ignores God in his life is hollow, is not in contact with realities, the eternal and unalterable facts of existence. Some consciousness of this is implied in the existence of **dissemblers,** who mask their actual aims, thus paying outward tribute to righteousness.

5. Two kinds of sinners, more or less overt. They may have actually assembled to frame their evil plans; or **congregation** may mean simply company, the 'set' of such as usually consort together for evil.

6. Washing was constantly used in a symbolical sense under the old covenant. But the reference here may be to the ablutions of the priests before they ministered at the altar, Exod. xxx. 17–21; or to the formal hand-washing of the city elders in Deut. xxi. 6, 7, who solemnly protest, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.' Compare the well-known incident of Pilate, Matt. xxvii. 4. The phrase to 'compass the altar' has been understood as implying a ritual procession round the altar. Such a custom is not recognized in the law, but it is quite possible hat it may have grown up in practice. The expression here used does not necessarily imply it.

7. The public worship of God, and the thankful acknowledgement f His providential mercies and deliverance, is a kind of antidote o the spirit which animated the disloyal men who gathered to

And tell of all thy wondrous works.
8 LORD, I love the habitation of thy house,
And the place where thy glory dwelleth.
9 Gather not my soul with sinners,
Nor my life with men of blood:
10 In whose hands is mischief,
And their right hand is full of bribes.
11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity:
Redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
12 My foot standeth in an even place:
In the congregations will I bless the LORD.

---

plot for their own advantage. Amidst the disquietudes anc complexities of the present, the Psalmists constantly find relief b celebrating the 'wondrous deeds' which God has wrought for Hi people in the past.

8. Love for God's house means love for God's presence. Hi **glory** may be manifested formally, as by the ark, which wa the symbol of His dwelling 'between the cherubims,' or by th cloud of glory which filled the house, 2 Chron. v. 14. But the Psalmists lay stress not upon the symbol, but the spiritual realit symbolized.

9, 10. Gather not my soul is understood by some of the bes commentators to mean, 'do not destroy my life' in the compan of these wicked men; 'let me not share their fate.' So Kirkpatrick who says, 'How natural a prayer if a pestilence was raging, whic seemed to strike righteous and wicked indiscriminately!' but thi conjecture, originally made by Ewald, seems gratuitous. Th Psalmist pleads that in heart and character he is diametricall opposed to these evil men, and prays that God would discriminat between him and them, that he should not be confused with ther or mistaken for one of them—either in their plots, their practices or their ultimate fate. (So Calvin, Hupfeld.)

blood . . . mischief . . . bribes: they commit violence whe they can; they plot maliciously when outrage would be dangerous and they pervert justice when called to account. Evidently me of position, of substance and influence, are the offenders here.

11. The Psalmist repeats his earlier resolves. **Redeem m** does not necessarily imply that the nation is the subject of th Psalm (Cheyne): it rather means, 'Save me from the punishme which must overtake these evil-doers.'

be merciful: better, 'be gracious unto me.'

12. Already an answer is vouchsafed to his prayer. In spir

A Psalm of David. 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I 1
  fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I
  be afraid?

---

he stands already in that 'open place' which meant freedom and safety. He gives thanks accordingly.

Psalm XXVII. Divine Light and Strength in Weal or Woe.

Good reasons have been assigned for considering this a composite Psalm. At the end of verse 6 a marked change occurs; partly in the rhythm, partly in the style, which becomes cumbrous in contrast to the simplicity of the earlier part, but chiefly in the tone and substance, which changes from the joyful confidence of faith to the plaint of anxious fear. It is of course possible that the Psalm was originally written as one whole in its present form. A change of mood is so far from being remarkable that few Psalms preserve one unbroken level of experience, either of sorrow or joy. But in this case the descent is so marked that it is difficult to understand how any writer's circumstances and outlook should be so suddenly and completely altered. If it be read as one whole, one must suppose that the position of the Psalmist is to be found in verses 13 and 14, that at first he expresses the confidence which the sight of 'the goodness of the Lord' awakened, and that afterwards allows himself to be overcome by fear of the 'enemies round about' him. If in verses 1–6 we have a joyful lyric of earlier date, we may imagine 7–13 to have been added later as a plea of the righteous man who lived in troublous times, and longed to realize the pristine joy, very much as in Isa. lxiii. 7 the prophet sings of Divine goodness and in 17 pleads with the God who seems to have forgotten and forsaken His people.

In this case 1–6 might be conceived as Davidic, although the language of verse 4 seems to point to a later period. The title in the LXX, which ascribes the Psalm to 'David before his anointing,' no doubt proceeds from the view that verse 10 refers to the time when David left his father and mother in Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4).

1. Nowhere else in the O. T. is God thus directly called **my light,** though the references to the illuminating influence of God's presence and favour are very numerous. The opening words, *Dominus illuminatio mea,* are well known as the motto of the Oxford University.

Render, 'the stronghold of my life' (R.V. marg.), since the idea here is not so much that God supplies strength to the

2 When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh,
Even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.
3 Though an host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear:
Though war should rise against me,
Even then will I be confident.
4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after;
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

Psalmist from within, as that He is a strong protection from without against cruel advancing foes.

2. In this verse, and again in verse 10, it is impossible to be sure whether an actually accomplished fact is referred to, or a general statement intended, which is thrown into the concrete as history. We might translate here, as some sound interpreters do,

> 'When evil-doers come against me, to devour my flesh,
> My adversaries and my foes upon me—they stumble and fall.'

The wild beasts ready to devour might be Saul and his myrmidons, or as in Job xix. 22, 'friends' more cruel than foes, who prey upon the reputation of their victim and add a keener pang to his bodily sufferings by taunting him with the fact that God has forsaken him. The simpler meaning seems the better here.

3. The contingent statement of this verse and its outlook into the future seem more significant if verse 2 be taken as a record of actual experience.

4. That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah, &c. Expressions of this kind must not be understood literally. Compare xxiii. 6, lxv. 4. It is not a building with four walls of which the Psalmist is thinking; and it would be a mistake to press the exact meaning of 'palace' in this verse or of 'tent' in verses 5 and 6. An earlier or later structure known as 'God's house' may have suggested the thought; but there were many Beth-els known to O. T. saints besides that to which Jacob gave the name.

It is the presence of Jehovah which delights the soul of the Psalmist; partly because of its 'beauty' or 'pleasantness,' the kindly greeting which lights up the face of the gracious Host:

For in the day of trouble he shall keep me secretly in 5
his pavilion :
In the covert of his tabernacle shall he hide me ;
He shall lift me up upon a rock.
And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine 6
enemies round about me ;
And I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy ;
I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice : 7
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

---

partly because of the mental enlightenment and help given to those who ask questions of this Interpreter in the House Beautiful; partly (see next verse) because of the security which this home affords, the sure asylum which may be found in this sanctuary.

5. A flimsy tent may be the surest of all refuges in the desert, if reception into it mean that the traveller is under the powerful protection of a Bedouin sheikh. Or, as in the latter part of this verse, a rocky fastness perfectly impregnable against enemies may be the figure employed. In either case it is the presence and favour of God which provides all that is needed. One who enjoys the intimacy of this high communion need fear neither foe nor storm.

6. In verse 3, when dire evils threatened, the Psalmist could tter his **Even then will I be confident** ; here, in the might of his aith he breaks forth with a triumphant **And now . . . I will sing** ! The mention of enemies here is fairly used by those who defend he unity of the Psalm to show that throughout the whole the vriter is exposed to danger, and that there is no inconsistency etween the thanksgiving of this verse and the suppliant tone of he next. Perowne translates 'sacrifices of shouting' ; Cheyne, of resounding mirth' ; and though neither of these phrases is ery happy, both contain an element of trumpet-toned jubilation hich ought to be expressed, and which the current translation acks. Compare R. V. marg., 'trumpet-sound.'

7. Render, 'Be gracious also unto me.' Whether the original oet passed at once from the last verse to this, or added the latter ortion of the Psalm in another mood, or an altogether later salmist blended his sighs with earlier glad songs, the reader of -day may unite these strains without any serious sense of congruity. Clouds hide the brightness of the early morning y ; the Psalmist prays that these may in turn be scattered.

8 *When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee,
Thy face, LORD, will I seek.
9 Hide not thy face from me;
Put not thy servant away in anger:
Thou hast been my help;
Cast me not off, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
But the LORD will take me up.
11 Teach me thy way, O LORD;
And lead me in a plain path,
Because of mine enemies.

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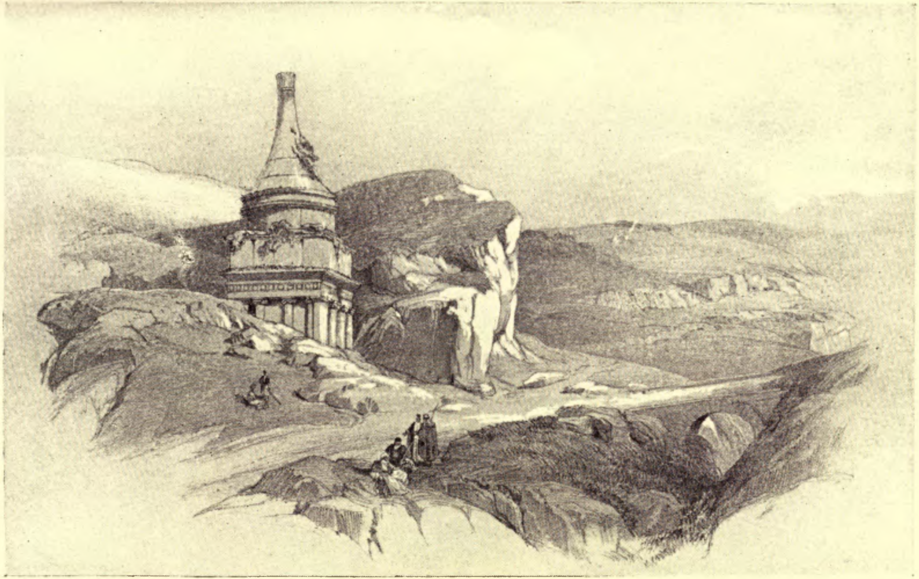
8. At least he may plead that he has ever been a true follower of Jehovah. In this verse emotion masters him, his utterance is broken, and brief to obscurity. It runs literally, 'To thee my heart hath said,' or as the P. B. V. picturesquely, if not quite accurately, 'My heart hath talked of thee, Seek ye my face: Thy face do I seek, Jehovah.' An inner colloquy has been going on: God's voice sounding in the heart, with its gracious invitation met by a response on the part of the Psalmist to the call which summons all God's people to follow Him. Compare cv. 4, 'Seek Jehovah and His strength: seek His face evermore.'

9. Man's best plea is always an echo of God's promise. He who has bidden His servants to seek will not hide His face when they obey Him.

10. The translation of R. V. **have forsaken** is more literal than that of A. V., 'When my father and my mother forsake me.' But it is not certain that past experience is intended, nor that a literal orphanhood or desertion on the part of parents is to be understood. The phrase is a strong expression of loneliness, as the encamping of hosts in verse 3 is of threatened danger. Actual present friendlessness, literal or comparative, is probably implied.

11. Here the Psalmist is not resting in the tranquil security of the Divine pavilion, but groping his way in an unknown country full of pitfalls laid by enemies who would compass his ruin. He desires to make his way to God's presence, but it can only be by God's path. Hence he asks that this pathway may be made clear, and that it may lie in an 'open place,' where those who lie in wait may gain no advantage over him.



Drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

ABSALOM'S PILLAR, IN THE KIDRON VALLEY

Deliver me not over unto the will of mine adversaries: 12
For false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as
breathe out cruelty.
I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness 13
of the LORD
In the land of the living.
Wait on the LORD: 14
Be strong, and let thine heart take courage;
Yea, wait thou on the LORD.

A Psalm of David. 28

Unto thee, O LORD, will I call; 1
My rock, be not thou deaf unto me:

---

12. A different kind of danger is hinted at here. In the earlier part of the Psalm it was necessary to encounter open foes and fight at long odds. Here malice shows itself in calumny, and God's servant fears lest the cause of righteousness should be hindered by his making a false step, or by the spread of false reports concerning him. Violence is the mischief of the strong, as fraud is the resort of those who must walk warily.

13. The insertion of 'I had fainted' in A. V. and R. V. gives the meaning excellently. The broken sentence of the original is, however, much more forcible: 'Oh! had I not believed to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living.' Compare Gen. . 15, 'Ah! but if Joseph were to show enmity against us'—i. e. hen it would go hardly with us indeed.

the land of the living is opposed to Sheol, the land of the hades. It is in this life that man is to praise God (Isa. xxxviii. 19), nd it is here, amongst those who inhabit 'the warm precincts of he cheerful day,' that the Psalmist desires to see God's goodness manifested.

14. Hence he calls upon himself to do all that can be done t the moment—wait for God's own time for intervention and eliverance. He bids himself be strong in the citadel of the oul, **let thine heart take courage:** for only those who fortify hemselves in faith and in the patience of hope can expect to see he salvation of the Lord.

PSALM XXVIII. PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS IN THE MIDST OF EVIL-DOERS.

There is an obvious and often-noted connexion between this salm and Psalm xxvi. The situation is similar, the pleas are almost

Lest, if thou be silent unto me,
I become like them that go down into the pit.
2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee,
When I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.
3 Draw me not away with the wicked,

---

the same. The Psalmist is surrounded by evil and mischief-working men, and is afraid of being involved with them in the fate which sooner or later will overtake them. Whether such fate were imminent in the form of pestilence or threatened destruction does not appear, though the hints to this effect are somewhat stronger than in the companion-Psalm. Many interpreters refer the Psalm to David during his flight from Absalom (Perowne, Kirkpatrick); Ewald suggests Josiah, and Hitzig Jeremiah, as the author, while Cheyne assigns Pss. xxvi, xxvii. 7–14 and xxviii t the time of Nehemiah and the persecution of Sanballat. It may be viewed as a great and abiding advantage—though to the historical student disappointing—that the language of the Psalm is found to suit periods and cases so different as these, togethe with a multitude besides in all generations.

The first strophe, verses 1 and 2, contains an opening cry; the next, verses 3–5, prays that God would discriminate and save the Psalmist from the punishment that will overtake the wicked the next, verses 6, 7, describes deliverance as already at the doors while the closing verses 8 and 9 commend the nation to God i prayer.

1. A pathetic appeal to be heard. Where we say **unto** th Hebrew more graphically says 'Be not silent (*or*, deaf) from me' i. e. turn not from me like one who is deaf or dumb, or bot When an answer to prayer fails to come, it seems as if God coul not or would not hear; and the pious Jew does not hesitate t use bold expressions from which less religious people shrin It was because the Psalmist really trusted God that he could th speak.

The expression 'They that go down to the pit' may imply th many were dying, as from pestilence; or more probably it is be understood in the sense that life is not life without God, a that if He cease to care for His people they sink into the me nonentity-existence of Sheol. The use of the same phrase cxliii. 7 seems to show that it was quasi-proverbial.

2. thy holy oracle means the Holy of Holies. Driver a Cheyne translate 'holy chancel,' which introduces a jarring mode note. The rendering of R.V. marg. is somewhat cumbrous; might read instead, 'toward thine inmost sanctuary.'

3. For the 'Gather me not' of xxvi. 9 we have here 'Drag

And with the workers of iniquity;
Which speak peace with their neighbours,
But mischief is in their hearts.
Give them according to their work, and according to the 4
wickedness of their doings:
Give them after the operation of their hands;
Render to them their desert.
Because they regard not the works of the LORD, 5
Nor the operation of his hands,
He shall break them down and not build them up.

Blessed be the LORD, 6
Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
The LORD is my strength and my shield; 7

---

not away,' which suggests, as the milder phrase does not, that punishment is impending for these evil-doers. But it may indicate only the intense repulsion with which the Psalmist regards the evil practices of his contemporaries, stern judgement upon whom is certain to fall, and the righteous can only welcome it.

4, 5. The imperative of the fourth verse is not identical in meaning with the future of the fifth, but the two are closely akin. The Psalmist asks that retribution may come, and he contemplates it as sure to come, in both cases viewing it as the necessary indication of God's righteous government in the earth.

The reiteration of the phrase 'works and operation of his ands' is very effective. Only one kind of work is truly stable n history the Psalmist would say, viz. the Divine. Those who fix on God's work their steadfast eye' will find that 'their work s done' so as to abide. But 'every branch that my Father hath ot planted shall be rooted up.' The phrases to 'break down' nd 'build up,' used of persons, are frequently found in the O. T., specially in Jeremiah.

6. A sudden outburst of praise, no more accounted for in the ontext than the sudden change from exultation to supplication in xvii. 7. Some commentators find in the verses that follow a later ddition, announcing that the prayer had been heard and answered. t seems more natural, however, to find the change in the Psalmist's wn spirit, and to read this verse as the confident utterance of the ith which is 'the giving substance to things hoped for.'

7. All the expressions of this verse confirm the view just taken. here is no note of actual objective deliverance.

My heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped :
Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth ;
And with my song will I praise him.
8 The LORD is their strength,
And he is a strong hold of salvation to his anointed.
9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance :
Feed them also, and bear them up for ever.

29 A Psalm of David.

1 Give unto the LORD, O ye sons of the mighty,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.

8, 9. Whether David or Jeremiah, or some obscure saint, be th speaker, this reference to the king and the nation forms a naturа and appropriate climax to the Psalm. As the text stands, **thei strength** refers to the people, mention of whom follows. A sligh change of reading would give, as in LXX, Vulg. and Syr. 'Jehovah is a strength unto his people' (R. V. marg.).

The closing prayer is very suggestive; **Feed them** should rathe be 'Tend them,' *lit.* 'Shepherd them'; for in that single word a kinds of loving help and 'governance' are included. In the las clause, to **bear them up** describes one feature only of th shepherd's care, though it is one which Christian art has mad gratefully familiar in its application to the Good Shepherd. Tha which Moses, for all his great-hearted patience, found himse unable to do for Israel in the wilderness (Exod. xvii. 4) God di throughout the generations—He 'bare and carried them all th days of old,' Isa. lxiii. 9. No prayer for church or nation can as a higher boon than this, that God would 'shepherd them and bea them up for ever.'

PSALM XXIX. THE VOICE OF GOD IN THE STORM.

The 'Psalm of the seven thunders,' as Delitzsch styles it. Th noun 'thunder' does not occur in the Psalm, and the verb bu once; but there can be no mistaking the meaning of the seve times repeated 'voice of Jehovah' which peals over earth and se In several places (e. g. Job xxviii. 26 and xxxviii. 25) the wor translated 'thunder' is simply 'voices'; compare the associatio of the two words in the Apocalypse (viii. 5, xi. 19, &c. Thunderstorms, such as are seldom seen in this country, ar frequent in Palestine in winter, and the Jew found in them speci manifestations of the might and majesty of Jehovah. Compar

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; 2
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: 3
The God of glory thundereth,
Even the LORD upon many waters.
The voice of the LORD is powerful; 4
The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

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he sublime description of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai in Exod. xix.

Few finer poetical descriptions of a storm are to be found in iterature. But the Psalmist did not labour to produce a piece of ine writing. Because his art vanishes in presence of his religion, the effect of highest art is unconsciously produced. Ewald ascribes the Psalm to David. It falls naturally into three parts—an introduction, verses 1 and 2; the sevenfold utterance of the voice of God, verses 3-9; and the conclusion, verses 10 and 11.

1. A magnificent exordium. The Psalmist calls upon the highest of the celestial hosts to celebrate the Divine glory which he feels himself unable to utter aright.

R. V. marg. shows that it is doubtful whether we should read, sons of God,' or 'sons of the gods'; i. e. whether the word *Elim* is to be understood in the highest or in a secondary sense. Examples of both uses are found; see Job xxxviii. 7 and Ps. xcvii. 7. But in either case the angels are meant, and it is more satisfactory, nd more in accordance with O. T. usage, to consider them as sons f God, as standing in His immediate presence, and as the highest f His creatures in strength and glory, than to view them as sons of the gods,' i. e. superhuman powers in a semi-mythological ense.

2. Heaven is exhibited as rendering homage, before the tribute earth is offered. Render, 'Worship Jehovah in holy array' R. V. marg.); the heavenly priests in the upper temple are presented as if attiring themselves to conduct celestial worship ight. The phrase **beauty of holiness** has wrought itself into ur language, but it hardly represents the original meaning.

3. The first peal. It is heard as coming over the sea from the est, whence storms arise often with great rapidity. The last line most majestic of all, 'Jehovah is on many waters.'

4. The second and third peals come in quick succession; the rse, onomatopoetic phrases of the Hebrew enhance the effect. he voice of Jehovah is 'with power, with majesty'; these eighty words prepare the way for the detailed description to low.

5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars;
Yea, the LORD breaketh in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf;
Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild-ox.
7 The voice of the LORD cleaveth the flames of fire.
8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness;
The LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve,
And strippeth the forests bare:
And in his temple every thing saith, Glory.

10 The LORD sat *as king* at the Flood;

5, 6. Trees and mountains, symbols of stability, are first named. Cedars, strong as the hills on which they grow, are snapped in pieces; the very mountains shake to their foundations, and leap in terror like the antelope or wild-ox. **Sirion** is an old Sidonian name for Hermon.

7. A single line in the very middle of the description comes like a flash of the lightning it describes:—

'The voice of Jehovah heweth out flames of fire.'

From the dark storm-cloud as quarry the forked lightning darts forth quivering, as if flakes of fire were hewn out by an Almighty hand.

8. As in the far north the loftiest mountains are represented as shaken to their foundations, so in the south country the open 'wilderness' trembles as this awful voice peals across its expanse **Kadesh** is a term somewhat vaguely used here, but it may be taken as indicating generally the 'treeless limestone plateau' which is found between the valley of Arabah and the plains of Philistia stretching along the southern border of Judah.

9. Render, 'maketh the hinds to writhe in travail.' The effect noted in this verse, both as regards trees and animals, are no mer poetical figures.

The last line takes us back to the palace of the skies. There i but one sound to be heard—**Glory**! This is the response mad to the appeal of the poet in the opening of the Psalm. The angeli hosts have witnessed this display of majestic energy, and the renew the song which God's works continually evoke from th heavenly choirs.

10. Then, having once obtained this glimpse into heaven, th Psalmist ventures to describe the throne and Him who sits thereon

Yea, the Lord sitteth as king for ever.
The Lord will give strength unto his people; 11
The Lord will bless his people with peace.

30

A Psalm; a Song at the Dedication of the House;
a Psalm of David.

I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast raised me up, 1
And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

The translation of R. V., **Jehovah sat** as king **at the Flood,** is almost certainly correct in leading the thought back to the great deluge of Gen. vi, of which the Psalmist is reminded by the tremendous downpour of rain following these repeated thunders. Supreme over that catastrophe of judgement in the days of Noah there sat a King, enthroned above all, holding the winds in His fists and the waters in the hollow of His hand, determining when the rain should fall and the moment when it should cease. But He who was King then is King always, and this, hints the Psalmist, is the one main lesson which the storms of life should teach the children of men.

11. Unless, indeed, there be a higher and even more comforting one—that out of such convulsions and cataclysms are to come the two things men most need, **strength** and **peace.** No music could be sweeter and softer than the 'dying fall' of the last line in the Hebrew, after the roaring of the storm is over. All is well when Heaven cries Glory and earth echoes Peace.

PSALM XXX. THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH.

If this Psalm be considered apart from its title, and the words taken in their natural meaning, it is seen to consist of praise to God after recovery from a dangerous illness. Verses 2 and 3, and again 8 and 9, are conclusive as to this. When we turn to the title—as printed in R. V., the punctuation in A. V. is incorrect—we find it to be unusual in form. The words 'of David' are separated from the word 'Psalm' with which they are usually joined, and between them is another description of the lyric, with a different word to describe it, this being the only instance in Book I in which this word *Shir*, or 'Song,' is found.

If the title be taken as one whole, it can only mean that the Psalm was originally composed by David either (1) at the dedication, not of the temple, but of the site of the temple at the threshing-floor of Ornan, after the pestilence described in 1 Chron. xxi. 28, or (2) at the dedication of his own palace in Zion, see 2 Sam. v. 11. There is serious objection to both these explanations. The first

2 O Lord my God,
I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.
3 O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol:

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was not, properly speaking, the dedication of a house, though in 1 Chron. xxii. 1 David is reported to have said, 'This is the house—and the altar'; and in the second case, David's palace was not, properly speaking, 'dedicated,' a word being employed which is not suitable either for a private house or a royal palace. Further, those who adopt this latter explanation as the most probable are obliged to suppose that at the time David was recovering from a serious sickness—a wholly gratuitous supposition.

The view is therefore generally accepted by later commentators that the title is composite, the words 'a Song at the Dedication of the House' having been inserted later, and indicating not the occasion of the original composition, but the liturgical use to which the Psalm was subsequently put.

What 'house,' then, is intended? We know that in later times a Feast of Dedication, mentioned in John x. 22, was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus to commemorate the purification of the temple after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes, see 1 Macc. iv. 59. We know, moreover, from the Talmud that this Psalm was in later times sung at that festival. It is not unnatural, therefore, to conclude that this was the occasion intended in the title. This is, however, in all probability not the case. It would imply that the title of a Psalm in Book I was thus somewhat awkwardly altered after B.C. 160—a perfectly possible, but not probable, supposition. It is much more likely that the Psalm was adapted for use at the dedication of the second temple under Ezra, when we are told that the people 'kept the dedication of this house of God with joy' (vi. 16). The nation at that time was like a sick man recovering from a wellnigh fatal illness, and other Psalms show that this figure of speech came naturally to the lips of those who had just returned from captivity and desired to praise God for deliverance. If this was so, and the title 'for the dedication' prefixed soon after the Exile, when Book I was collected, it is easy to understand the use made of it in later times.

The outline of the Psalm is clear. In verses 1–3 the Psalmist praises God for recovered health; in 4–6 he generalizes, calling on others to recognize similar manifestations of Divine goodness; in 7–10 he recounts his own experience in greater detail; while in 11, 12 he resolves that his thanksgiving shall be rendered not only with his lips but in his life.

1–3. Thou hast drawn me up: from the depths of suffering, or humiliation, or despair—or from the gates of death. The word is applicable to any of these experiences, but most appropriate in the

Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to
 the pit.
Sing praise unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, 4
And give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger is but for a moment; 5
In his favour is life:
Weeping may tarry for the night,
But joy *cometh* in the morning.
As for me, I said in my prosperity, 6
I shall never be moved.

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last. The deliverance from the malignity of foes who would have rejoiced at the Psalmist's calamity does not sound natural in our ears, if the recovery was simply from sickness. But other Psalms, and Eastern experience generally, show that an almost savage delight in the personal misfortunes of an enemy was usual enough. God's raising up of the sufferer from a dying bed was a proof of personal favour which would silence heartless foes.

4. The **saints** in this verse are those who are connected with Jehovah by covenant-bonds and have made proof of His gracious fidelity to His promises. Compare Ps. l. 5.

to his holy name: *lit.* 'to the memorial of his holiness.' History is His monument and lasting memorial. It is the recollection of the self-manifestation which God has made of Himself which prompts the thanksgiving: God's 'name' is the expression of that manifestion, and 'holiness' is the sum of His attributes.

5. Render the second clause, with R. V. marg., 'His favour is for a life time.' This preserves the parallelism, though the extreme brevity of the original makes it quite possible that the antithesis implied in the text of A. V. and R. V. gives the author's meaning.

The metaphor in the latter part of the verse is beautiful, and only partially brought out even in R. V. It runs, 'Weeping may be a guest for the night, but in the morning—is a ringing cry of joy!' But the English reader must understand that for this clumsy paraphrase in eighteen words the original has only five. The 'morning of joy' is frequently referred to in the Psalms; see xc. 14 and cxliii. 8.

6. A chapter from past history. Time was, says the Psalmist, when I knew the proverbial ease and security of the prosperous. The rich fool in our Lord's parable is but the type of all who in the abundance of worldly possessions forget their dependence

7 Thou, Lord, of thy favour hadst made my mountain to
stand strong:
Thou didst hide thy face; I was troubled.
8 I cried to thee, O Lord;
And unto the Lord I made supplication:
9 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to
the pit?
Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?
10 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me:
Lord, be thou my helper.
11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;

---

on God, and imagine that nothing can shake their well-grounded self-confidence.

7. The former clause of this verse is not easy to translate as it stands; the versions vary, and the Targum paraphrases. Th meaning of 'Thou hadst established strength for my mountain is clear enough, though in all probability the text should b altered so as to give, 'Thou hadst made me to stand upon stron mountains.'

A moment—and all is changed. The hiding of God's fac changes the landscape of the life more than the obscuration of th sun changes the aspect of the fields. The Psalmist does not sa what happened in his life: it was probably a sudden and sever sickness, but he was made to quail with a consternation an bewilderment which our English word **troubled** feebly expresse

8. We are reminded of Hezekiah's plea in Isa. xxxviii. Bot he and the Psalmist had learned the lesson of affliction and the tru way in which to use it. The tense of **I cried** takes the write and reader back very vividly to the scene as enacted: it might b paraphrased, 'Behold me crying!'

9. The same view of death is implied here which meets us in th sixth and several other Psalms, as well as in the dirge of Hezekia Life in Sheol is not worthy to be called life, and if God remov His servant thither He will lose His 'little meed of huma praise.'

11. Again the transition is sudden, a revolution is accomplishe by the appearance of the sun from behind the cloud. The rende ing, 'Thou didst turn—didst loose—didst gird,' points more direct to the moment of deliverance.

The language is, of course, figurative. Calvin, who does n accept the interpretation of a literal recovery from sicknes

Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with
  gladness:
To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and 12
  not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. **31**

In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be 1
  ashamed:

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comments that it is unlikely that David would wear sackcloth on a sick-bed. But the expression is proverbial, like the 'garland for ashes' in Isa. lxi. 3. This does not, of course, exclude Calvin's point that the Psalmist mourned as a true penitent before God.

12. My **glory:** i. e. my soul, as man's special treasure and title to honour. The resolution with which the Psalm closes is obviously the utterance of a man who wishes to prove in practice as long as he lives the reality of his gratitude to the 'God of his salvation.'

PSALM XXXI. PRAYERFUL SURRENDER INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

Tradition assigns this Psalm to David. The title in the LXX ascribes it to a period of 'extreme fear,' which is supposed to be that of his stay in the wilderness of Maon (1 Sam. xxiii. 26; compare the 'alarm' of verse 22 in the Psalm). But there are many points of parallel with passages in Jeremiah. The whole situation described, as well as the plaintive tone in the writing, suggest rather the circumstances of Jeremiah's time, while *Magor-Missabib* (verse 13) is a phrase indissolubly associated with that prophet: compare Jer. vi. 25, xx. 3, 10, &c. The similarities in phraseology may be traced in detail; specimens may be found in verse 10 compared with Jer. xx. 18, and in verse 22 compared with Lam. iii. 54. It is known that Jeremiah's writings are full of reminiscences of other authors, and the prophet may have been quoting the Psalmist, but the probability is that the Psalm itself emanates from the later period. There is no reason, with Ewald, to suppose that Jeremiah himself was the author.

The conjecture has been advanced that the paragraph 9–18, the tone of which differs markedly from the earlier and later portions of the Psalm, is of later origin, whilst the rest is Davidic. A change of mood, as we have repeatedly seen, does not imply a change of author. None the less it is quite possible that in this case a 'Davidic' Psalm of great vigour and buoyancy has been

Deliver me in thy righteousness.
2 Bow down thine ear unto me; deliver me speedily:
Be thou to me a strong rock, an house of defence to save me.
3 For thou art my rock and my fortress;
Therefore for thy name's sake lead me and guide me.
4 Pluck me out of the net that they have laid privily for me;
For thou art my strong hold.
5 Into thine hand I commend my spirit:

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adapted for use in a later period of national trouble. If such a practice of modification was at all frequent—and there are good reasons for supposing this—the present case would appear to afford a good example.

In any case the divisions of the Psalm are very clearly marked. The first section, verses 1-8, recognizes past mercies and contains prayers for deliverance, whilst in the last, verses 19-24, gratitude predominates over petition. The middle section, verses 9-18, breathes a plaintive plea for help in the extremity of suffering, such as can hardly under any circumstances have come from David's pen.

1. Render, 'In thee have I taken refuge.' The often-repeated plea that the Psalmist may not be **ashamed** implies partly the fear of disappointment and loss of faith within, occasioned by God's apparent desertion; partly to the anticipated triumph without, of those who had set themselves against God and the servant of God. Compare xxii. 7 f. God's **righteousness** is pledged to the defence of the right, and upon this the Psalmist rests in confidence.

2, 3. It is a shallow criticism to urge that if God actually is a stronghold for His servants they need not pray that He would be such. On the contrary, these words express the very spirit of true prayer, which does not seek to change the nature or to bend the will of an All-gracious as well as an All-wise God, but which implores that the Divine Will may manifest the Divine Nature in the supplicant's behalf.

Hence, in the latter part of verse 3, some translate, 'Thou wilt lead me and guide me.' Whether the words form a petition or a statement, they express trustful confidence.

4. The metaphors here, if closely pressed, are somewhat mixed. In the former clause the Psalmist is caught in the snare of the fowler, in the latter he flies for refuge from an enemy into a fastness. But the figures in these often-recurring petitions have passed almost into the language of ordinary life; they are graphic current expressions, not to be elaborated into similes.

5. An often-quoted verse, rendered sacred to Christians by the

Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou God of truth.
I hate them that regard lying vanities: 6
But I trust in the LORD.
I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: 7
For thou hast seen my affliction;
Thou hast known my soul in adversities:
And thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; 8
Thou hast set my feet in a large place.
Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in distress: 9

Saviour's use of it upon the cross. Saints of all ages have sought thus to follow their Master at the approach of death, and no words can be more appropriate than these when the moment of 'yielding up the spirit' draws near. But they were not originally written with this view, and should be read in the light of active service, as well as in that of resignation to an inevitable lot. The life which was originally received from God, which has been, so to speak, restored in past deliverances when God has redeemed it from destruction, is here by an act of faith placed in God's hands, in the confidence that He will defend and preserve it again.

6. This verse points rather to the time of Jeremiah than to that of David. **Lying vanities,** *lit.* 'empty nothings,' refers to idols and idol-worship. See Jer. viii. 19, where the parallel word is 'graven images,' and x. 8, where 'doctrine of vanities' means that those who worship 'stocks and stones' are likely to be 'wooden' and insensate, as a stream cannot rise above its source. The LXX and other versions follow another reading, 'Thou hast hated'; either gives good sense.

The prayer of Jonah contains the characteristic phrase of this verse, but it is impossible to adduce evidence as to the relative date of the Psalm embodied in the prophecy and that contained in the Psalter.

7. Some render this as prayer, 'Let me be glad,' i. e. 'Do thou help me to rejoice,' and the following clauses as prophetic perfects, only anticipatory of deliverance to come. But the simpler meaning is the better. The Psalmist is recording actual mercies in the past, and rousing his own soul to joy in the retrospect.

8. The 'large room' is, of course, the wide and open space which stands for freedom, power of expatiation, gracious opportunity and a clear course for action. See xviii. 19 and many similar passages. 'Broad space' would be a better translation.

9. The literary question raised in the Introduction concerning this and the following verses is subordinate, and perhaps can

Mine eye wasteth away with grief, *yea*, my soul and my body.
10 For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing:
My strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are wasted away.
11 Because of all mine adversaries I am become a reproach,
Yea, unto my neighbours exceedingly, and a fear to mine acquaintance:
They that did see me without fled from me.

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never be settled. Whether a hymn containing many stanzas, describing different and apparently incompatible moods, was written by one author at one time, as embodying diversified experience, or by the same author at different times, or by different authors expressing the same deep religious confidence under widely differing circumstances, can only be determined by fuller knowledge than we possess in the case of the Psalms. The line of interpretation adopted in Ps. xxvii holds good here. The Psalm now is one whole, and if it be read as such, verses 9-18 describe the misery of the present in sharp contrast with the remembered mercy and joy of the past.

9. The physical marks of deep sorrow are here enumerated, the sinking of the eyes and the wasting of the frame. These need not be literally understood, though Jeremiah and other sufferers of his time were not unacquainted with such experiences.

10. Interpreters differ as to whether the word translated **iniquity** points to some secret sin which the Psalmist confesses as his worst trouble, or whether, with LXX, Syr., and other versions, it should be understood, like all the other clauses, of 'affliction.' If sin be intended, this is the one note of the kind in a plea which is emphatically that of a man found faithful among the faithless.

11. The clause **Because of all mine adversaries** reads awkwardly, and a different arrangement of clauses has been suggested, as well as sundry emendations of the text. But it expresses in a terse and somewhat abrupt form the reason of the Psalmist's desertion by his friends. The persecuted man soon becomes unpopular, even amongst those who ought to know his character and judge him fairly. Three concentric circles are described—neighbours, acquaintances, and chance onlookers; he is shunned by all alike, as a man out of favour with the authorities, perhaps under Divine condemnation. Jeremiah speaks of being made a laughing-stock to some of his friends, whilst others

I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: 12
I am like a broken vessel.
For I have heard the defaming of many, 13
Terror on every side:
While they took counsel together against me,
They devised to take away my life.
But I trusted in thee, O LORD: 14
I said, Thou art my God.
My times are in thy hand: 15
Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from
them that persecute me.
Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: 16
Save me in thy lovingkindness.

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denounced him and exulted over every trip he made; his 'familiar friends' watched 'for his halting,' xx. 7, 10.

12. Neglect has reached such a point that it is almost worse than persecution. Who cares for a dead man, or a potsherd left in the dungheap?

13. *Magor-missabib* may have been a proverb. **Terror on every side** was not a rare phenomenon in the chequered history of Israel. The name was given in threatening derision to Pashhur, who was to be a terror to himself and to all his friends, Jer. xx. 3, 4; but the phrase is also used to describe the desolation of Jerusalem after the Babylonish invasion in Lam. ii. 22, and the individual saint had often occasion to employ it as too aptly descriptive of his condition. Hence we cannot say that the Psalmist borrowed it from the prophet, or vice versa.

14. Render, 'But I—I trust in Thee, O Jehovah.' The Psalmist is now turning again to the source of strength of which he had sung in the first stanza; but at present only in resignation and prayer; rejoicing comes later.

15, 16. My times: the plural seems to refer especially to what we call crises or epochs in life, when there is special need of help, or special comfort in the thought that all are under the control of a God of love. Or the phrase may point only to life as a whole: see 1 Chron. xxix. 30, where we read of the acts of David 'and the times that went over him.'

Three prayers follow—for deliverance, for Divine favour, and for 'salvation' in the larger sense of the word. The petition, **Make thy face to shine,** used in the priestly benediction of Num. vi. 25, is often found on the lips of O. T. saints. Compare Ps. lxvii.

17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee:
Let the wicked be ashamed, let them be silent in Sheol.
18 Let the lying lips be dumb;
Which speak against the righteous insolently,
With pride and contempt.
19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee,
Which thou hast wrought for them that put their trust in thee, before the sons of men!
20 In the covert of thy presence shalt thou hide them from the plottings of man:
Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

17, 18. These verses form a link with the opening of the Psalm, and help to maintain its unity. Some read the tenses as futures—'I shall not be ashamed,' &c., but at this point the Psalmist seems still to be in the mood of prayer. The words of his wicked oppressors are marked by (1) falsehood, (2) pride, (3) contempt: well may he long that such lips should be silenced by the only power that can control them.

19. Once again the music changes. It is as if a fuller revelation had been made of 'the other side of cloudland,' and the thought of the storehouse of Divine grace and all that it contains of succour banishes fear and sorrow.

The last clause **before the sons of men** reads somewhat awkwardly in our version. It depends upon the verb **wrought**, and its emphatic position brings out the truth that the wealth in the storehouse is available and producible in times of need, so that the most sceptical must acknowledge its power and value. Render, 'Dealt out unto them that take refuge in Thee—in the sight of the children of men.'

20. The 'hiding' is suggested by the 'taking refuge' of the last verse. If the harsh and arrogant voices of evil-doers are no at once silenced, God's servant has a quiet retreat in which he may be preserved from danger, forget his trouble, and be strengthened for further service. God's presence is such a pavilion for the righteous. Many commentators emphasize the paradox o being hidden in light, but the thought of the brightness of the Divine Face and Presence seems for the moment to have given

Blessed be the LORD : 21
For he hath shewed me his marvellous lovingkindness
  in a strong city.
As for me, I said in my haste, I am cut off from before 22
  thine eyes :
Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications
  when I cried unto thee.
O love the LORD, all ye his saints : 23
The LORD preserveth the faithful,
And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.
Be strong, and let your heart take courage, 24
All ye that hope in the LORD.

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place to the protection of His embrace and the shelter enjoyed by those admitted to intimate communion with Him.

21. If this verse records actual history it can hardly have been written at the same time as verses 9 and 12, unless a long and chequered experience is as it were dramatized by the Psalmist and presented in a series of pictures.

in a strong city : not to be understood literally, either of David in Ziklag or of Jeremiah in Jerusalem, but generally and metaphorically of that 'safe stronghold' which God continually provides for those who trust Him.

22. in my haste : rather, 'alarm,' see R. V. marg. Both LXX and Jerome use words which imply extreme fear, that measure of affright' which deprives a man of his senses. 'Haste' is an altogether inadequate rendering, and the whole verse implies peril which had reduced the Psalmist to utter despair. His momentary oss of faith and hope did not, however, prevent him from crying or help, and he regards it as 'marvellous lovingkindness' that God eard and succoured him.

23, 24. Such experiences warrant the Psalmist in encouraging nd exhorting others. **Preserveth the faithful** is probably the orrect translation, not 'keepeth faithfulness' as in R. V. marg. he **proud doer** is the antithesis of the faithful man ; self-confience is associated with evil in O. T. ethics, as faith is with ghteousness.

Those who **hope in Jehovah** wait for Him (marg.), for 'if we ope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' hose addressed in the last verse formed apparently in the time the Psalmist a class—probably a small band—who were content 'hope and quietly wait for the salvation of Jehovah' (Lam. iii.

32 *A Psalm* of David. Maschil.

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

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26). The lying lips were not yet silent, and the word of encouragement from one who had found refuge in the 'secret pavilion and the 'strong city' forms an appropriate close to a Psalm which abundantly illustrates the tenacity and triumph of faith.

PSALM XXXII. THE JOY OF THE FORGIVEN SINNER.

The second of the seven 'penitential' Psalms. It exhibits more of the mystic joys of penitence than Ps. vi or Ps. xxxviii, and is in its spirit akin to Ps. cxxx. All the older commentators and many even of modern critics allow it to be Davidic, or at least find its language to be appropriate in David's lips after his great sin in the matter of Bath-sheba and Uriah. It is clear, however, that this Psalm does not portray the bitterness of soul felt by the newly awakened conscience, nor the contrite anguish of the spirit overwhelmed with self-reproach at the thought of heinous sin. The man who wrote it must have passed through such experiences, but they could hardly have been very recent, and he has certainly emerged from them into the freedom and sunshine o pardon. The modern tendency—illustrated by Canon Cheyne amongst others—to treat such a Psalm as this as 'principally i not exclusively national' is surely mistaken. Such an interpretation empties the words of their simple and natural meaning, and strikes a chill into the heart of the most spiritual religion of the O. T. That a 'pious Israelite' of post-Exilic days in recounting his own experiences should think also of 'every one that is godly is quite intelligible, but confession, contrition and the joy o pardon are primarily individual, and it is only in a secondary though doubtless a real sense that the words which express these feelings apply to the community.

The opening of the Psalm, verses 1 and 2, describes the blessedness of forgiveness; the next three verses recount the Psalmist's deep and sore grief over his sin, till he brought it in confession to God and was pardoned. Then he generalizes in verses 6–10 showing the folly of hardening the heart against a God so graciously ready to receive all who turn to Him in penitence, and (verse 11) the unspeakable happiness of those who know Jehovah as their God.

For the term 'Maschil' see Introd. p. 16. It is not probable that the word refers to the contents of the Psalm, as if it were 'didactic' or 'contemplative' in character, but if 'Maschil' be derived from a root which indicates 'skill,' it may have a musical reference and indicate a more artistic and elaborate musical

Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not 2
iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.
When I kept silence, my bones waxed old 3
Through my roaring all the day long.
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: 4

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accompaniment than usual. See also Psalm xlvii. 7, where the word is rendered 'with understanding,' or 'in a skilful Psalm.'

1, 2. The word translated **blessed** does not necessarily imply the inward and spiritual joy of the N. T. beatitude. Here it conveys a shade of meaning absent from Ps. i. 1, where the outward lot and condition of the righteous man is the main theme.

Three kinds of deliverance are mentioned, all denoting removal of the guilt of sin. The distinction between the three words **transgression, sin,** and **iniquity** should probably not be pressed, though etymologically they indicate respectively disobedience, failure, and perversity. But it is well to note that at this stage in the history of Israel the meaning of forgiveness was so well understood. It is here described as (*a*) the lifting of a burden; (*b*) the protecting from deserved wrath; (*c*) release from a justly incurred debt. The personal element in forgiveness is thus excellently brought out. Sin disturbs the relation between God and the soul, it is this which constitutes the essence of the evil, and nothing but the full restoration of that spiritual harmony will 'save' the man, or bring him into the state of blessedness here described.

The last clause of verse 2 is by some interpreted to mean the condition on which forgiveness will be granted. In that case **no guile** would mean perfect sincerity in confessing and forsaking sin. This seems, however, an inappropriate climax, and the phrase should be understood as describing the clear, uninterrupted communion with God enjoyed by the forgiven sinner, when the deceitfulness and perverseness of sin has been put away. It corresponds to the 'clean heart' of li. 10. 'God's kiss of forgiveness sucks the poison from the wound' (Maclaren).

3, 4. A chapter from the experience of one who knows. The uffering of these verses is caused by the wrong-doer's determination o cling to his sin, his **silence** is equivalent to a refusal to 'cleanse he stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff.' It is not necessary to nderstand that he passed through actual sickness, though the icture of a man groaning aloud in pain, the framework of his ody shaken, the vital juices parched with fever, seems at first to uggest this. The significant clause is, **thy hand was heavy upon**

My moisture was changed *as* with the drought of summer.
[Selah
5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity
have I not hid:
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. [Selah
6 For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in
a time when thou mayest be found:
Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not
reach unto him.

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me. Whether conscience was troubled within, or sickness laid the offender low, or both, the Psalmist recognizes that the process of humbling was God's work. When day and night he obtained no rest he recognized why and by whom his heart was made restless, as Augustine—with whom this Psalm was a favourite—did long afterwards. This 'evangelical' tone in the Psalm touches universal experience, when conscience is once awakened.

5. The pathway to the light. First, the truth must be recognized and faced. The four clauses of this verse describe the process. In the first the tense 'I began to acknowledge' indicates the action in its incipiency and progress. We see the penitent coming, and hear him beginning to speak. The next, 'I did not hide,' describes a completed action. The next, **I said, I will confess** takes us back to the inner movements of the spirit which made the confession complete; while the last should be rendered **And thou** 'thou didst forgive the iniquity of my sin!'

This verse is marked off by a double **Selah**—a musical interlude occurring before and after it. It may be conceived that in the former case the accompaniment would be rendered 'piano' upon the strings, while in the latter the 'loud-sounding cymbals' woulc be needed.

6. For this means 'because of this, because thou art a graciou and forgiving God.' The word *chasid*, translated **godly,** designate the man who comes within God's covenant of grace—Israel in the Old Testament, all the world in the New. The Psalmist bid all such to pray, and assures them that the time of praying will b 'a time of finding,' the time of asking will be a time of acceptance see Ps. lxix. 13. There may be a hint, as in Isa. lv. 6 and elsewhere, that sometimes God may not be found, but that note woul jar in this connexion; and the assurance of the latter clause, tha 'the waters in full flood shall not reach unto him,' shows that th prayer of the penitent will assuredly be heard.

Thou art my hiding place; thou wilt preserve me from 7
trouble;
Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance.
[Selah
I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou 8
shalt go:
I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.
Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no 9
understanding:
Whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in,
Else they will not come near unto thee.
Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: 10

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7. Thou art my hiding place, &c. A natural and appropriate turning of the heart to God in grateful recognition. In such matters it is hard to speak of God without speaking to Him. The Psalmist has found his hiding and resting place, in it he is not only guarded from danger but as it were encircled with strains of music and songs of gladness. Everything that happens to him becomes an occasion of rejoicing.

8. After an interlude the personal pronouns change again. God speaks, and in response to His servant's appeal promises him instruction, counsel, and guidance. The beautiful suggestiveness of A. V., 'I will guide thee with mine eye,' need not be wholly ost, though R. V. shows that the Hebrew does not mean that 'a look is enough.' It means that with a Divine word of counsel n the ear, and the eye of Providence watching from above, the raveller in the pathway of life will be safe.

9. But the kindliness and gentleness of God's guidance is uggested by this verse. A true *chasid*, loving and beloved, hould find the glance of the Divine eye sufficient both for warning and direction. The rendering of R. V., Else **they will not come near unto thee,** has removed the awkwardness of A. V., nd made it clear that the contrast lies between the curb and ridle which animals need if they are to be guided rightly, and the ree and unconstrained service which ought to be rendered by man who is in gracious covenant-relation with God. One may well compare the 'free' or 'willing spirit' of Ps. li. 12, and the well-known lines which paraphrase cxvi. 16:—

> 'The mercy that hath loosed my bands Hath bound me fast to Thee.'

10. God reserves His bit and bridle, and uses even scourges

But he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass
him about.
11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous:
And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

33 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous:
Praise is comely for the upright.

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and goads, for such as will not be led by kindness. The **sorrows** here mentioned may be viewed as punishments for evil committed, or as chastisements to lead to a better mind. The context seems to show that the former are intended. The lot of the wicked is strongly contrasted with that of the trustful and obedient man. In verse 7 he was represented as surrounded with songs o triumph, here he is encompassed by God's lovingkindness. Th two circles coincide. He who is girded with mercy is crowne with joy.

11. The Psalmist closes with an invitation corresponding t that in verse 6. There the godly were bidden to pray, here the are exhorted to rejoice. Those who faithfully obey the forme precept will hardly need the latter.

PSALM XXXIII. A SONG OF NATIONAL DELIVERANCE.

Contrary to the rule in the First Book, this Psalm is withou a title. The only other exceptions are Pss. i and ii which ar introductory, and x which is closely linked with ix. Thus thi Psalm may be styled the only anonymous one in the body of th Book. The LXX ascribes it to David. In character also it belong to the later, national, liturgical psalmody, of which abundan examples are to be found in Book V. There is little or nothin in the Psalm itself to guide us as to date, but the praise her rendered to Jehovah as the God of the whole earth and the rule of the nations at large, and what may be described as th 'universalistic' tone of the Psalm generally, would point t a comparatively late period for its composition.

It is markedly symmetrical in structure. Between two strophe of six lines which begin and end the Psalm are to be foun eight quatrains. Thus verses 1–3 form an introduction; verse 4–19 form the body of the Psalm and describe God's mor attributes, His work in creation, His rule over the nations an special care of His own people; while verses 20–22 contain th praise which this favoured people in full chorus render to Him.

1. The opening word translated **Rejoice** implies a 'ringin cry' of joy, a jubilant outburst of thanksgiving which our Englis

Give thanks unto the LORD with harp: 2
Sing praises unto him with the psaltery of ten strings.
Sing unto him a new song; 3
Play skilfully with a loud noise.
For the word of the LORD is right; 4
And all his work is *done* in faithfulness.
He loveth righteousness and judgement: 5
The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.

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word feebly expresses. The praise in this case is to be offered by those best qualified to present it, as well as best able to appreciate the grounds for it. The **righteous** and the **upright** are not simply men who are 'of Israel,' they are the true Israel of God.

2. Two musical instruments are named here, not three as in A. V. The names in Hebrew are *Kinnor* and *nebhel*, the exact meaning of which has been much debated. But, if we divide stringed instruments of the class in question into three types—the lyre, the lute or guitar, and the harp, there appears to be strong probability that the *Kinnor* (in the LXX *Kithara*) was of the lyre-type, while the *nebhel* (in Greek *psalterion*) was a harp. That is, the former was small, portable, having from three to six strings, a resonance-body at the base and cross-bar at the top, but without the long neck, finger-board, and sounding-board at the back characteristic of the guitar; while the latter was larger, with strings varying in number from six to sixteen, and it was held in one hand, whilst played upon with a plectrum in the other. The distinction thus marked becomes clear enough in later times, but was probably not discernible in the simpler instruments of a primitive age, and it would be a mistake to insist upon an exact modern rendering of each Hebrew word wherever it occurs.

3. The **new song** of which we often read in the O.T. frequently turns upon an old theme. In a sense the theme is always old—the goodness and mercy of God; but the subject may be either an entirely new instance of this, or former instances celebrated with new music and freshly grateful hearts.

In the second clause are two ideas, 'strike ye well the strings' refers to the music—the main feature; 'with joyful shouting'—this was of the nature of accompaniment.

4, 5. The first theme of praise is the moral character or attribute of Jehovah. Four words emphasize His righteousness and one His love. His word is 'upright'; His works are marked by **faithfulness.** He loves **righteousness** as a principle, and **judgement** its practical realization. The earth is full of His **lovingkindness.**

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made;
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap:
He layeth up the deeps in storehouses.
8 Let all the earth fear the LORD:
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
9 For he spake, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.

Thus thought and affection, speech and action, so far as these may be predicated of the Most High, are characterized by that perfect righteousness, which nowhere in the Hebrew conveys an idea of 'justice' as opposed to love, but like our 'equity' implies due and kindly consideration of all the facts of every case.

6. Here the Psalmist goes back to creation as supplying his first illustration. The emphasis laid upon the word of God in Gen. i is very marked: the phrase 'God said' is often repeated. The word for **breath** is the same as that for spirit in Gen. i. 3, but the ideas in the two cases are quite different. Here it corresponds to the spoken word, in Genesis the 'breath of God' broods as a dove and hovers with outspread wings over chaos to bring forth order and life and peace. The stress here lies upon the fact that a single spoken fiat of Jehovah is mighty enough to create all the host of heaven, the celestial orbs in all their grandeur and multitude.

7. The thought follows the creation-narrative, but makes it more definite. The 'gathering of waters' and the mention of **the deeps** belong to Gen. i, but the idea of the sea as **an heap** and of **storehouses** is later. These figures may be so construed as to be unpoetical, especially if we were to read with several ancient versions 'as in a bottle.' But, properly understood, both metaphors are apt and striking. The sea as seen from the land appears to swell into a mass, and, as we now know, is actually gathered into a mass by the attraction of the moon; while to the primitive mind the waters of ocean were, like the forces of the wind, gathered in unimaginable treasure-houses, out of which they were let loose from time to time by supernatural powers to perform great deeds, now of beneficence, now of destruction. Compare Jer. x. 13, 'He bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries.'

8, 9. A continuation of the main thought, with its natural conclusion. One who could 'speak a world from nought' must surely be had in reverence by all His creatures. Render, **For** *He* **spake, and** (so) **it was:** a reference to the repeated 'and it was so' of Gen. i.

The LORD bringeth the counsel of the nations to nought: 10
He maketh the thoughts of the peoples to be of none
effect.
The counsel of the LORD standeth fast for ever, 11
The thoughts of his heart to all generations.
Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; 12
The people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.
The LORD looketh from heaven; 13
He beholdeth all the sons of men;
From the place of his habitation he looketh forth 14
Upon all the inhabitants of the earth;
He that fashioneth the hearts of them all, 15
That considereth all their works.

10, 11. From creation the Psalmist passes to history. And iere the strange phenomenon meets us of the creature rebelling gainst the Creator: whole nations and peoples with **counsel** nd **thoughts** of their own opposed to those of their Maker. here can be no doubt, however, as to which are stable and which atile, which transient and which permanent. As the heavens re higher than the earth, so are His thoughts above man's, and Iis purposes cannot fail. For 'there is no wisdom nor counsel or understanding against the Lord,' Prov. xxi. 30.

12. From a survey of history at large the Psalmist turns to iat of the chosen people. But he does not here dwell in detail, s do other Psalmists, upon God's 'mighty works' in behalf of srael; rather he fastens attention for a moment upon the fact iat the Creator and Preserver of all has deigned to choose one ation for His own special possession. The natural inference omes later.

For the thought of this verse compare 'the song of Moses' in eut. xxxiii, especially verses 26–29; and 2 Sam. vii. 23, 'What ie nation in the earth is like thy people, even Israel,' &c.

13. The connexion of thought is that the God who thus aciously cares for Israel is He who 'all the earth surveys,' who olds all its inhabitants in the hollow of His hand.

14. Render, 'He gazeth'—a special word, illustrated by r. xxxii. 19, 'Whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the ns of men.'

15. Render, 'Even he who formeth the hearts of them all.
Who discerneth all their works.'

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of an host :
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
17 An horse is a vain thing for safety :
Neither shall he deliver any by his great power.
18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fea him,
Upon them that hope in his mercy ;
19 To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

He made and understands the nature of all, yet has deigne to bestow special care on Israel. But the word translated 'all means literally 'together,' and conveys the idea of individual a well as universal knowledge.

16. It is as if the Psalmist were still following the thoughts c Deut. xxxiii, 'What people is like thee, O Israel?' Those wh trust to great armies or valiant heroes are miserably disappointec Some find an allusion here to Pharaoh and his host overwhelme in the Red Sea, but this seems far-fetched, and similar expressior are found in lx. 11, 12 and elsewhere. The R. V. does nc attempt to preserve the parallelism of the original, in which wor corresponds to word—'the king' is not saved 'by the greatness c his army,' nor 'the hero by the greatness of his strength.' W have no reason to suppose that any special historical event alluded to in either clause.

17. Israel did not usually employ war-horses, but in earl times entrenched themselves in the hills of Canaan, and were disadvantage when facing the chariots and horses of the Philistin and others in the plains. The Egyptian and Assyrian caval were very formidable, and the prophets denounced those wh were disposed to rely on alliance with Egypt ; see Isa. xxxi. and compare Deut. xvii. 16, where the use of horses is distinct discouraged. So 'the horse' came to represent earthly pow and material resources, Ps. xx. 7, xxi. 31. For a picture of tl war-horse and its 'great strength,' see the highly poetical ar spirited description in Job xxxix. 19–25.

18, 19. A contrast is drawn between these vain grounds confidence and the care which God exercises over those wl trust Him. The phrase **them that fear him**, i. e. reverence ar obey Him, is synonymous with **them that hope in his merc** These are content to hope, and have a right to hope, for manifestation of His lovingkindness. Neither sword nor fami shall destroy them.

Our soul hath waited for the LORD: 20
He is our help and our shield.
For our heart shall rejoice in him, 21
Because we have trusted in his holy name.
Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, 22
According as we have hoped in thee.

A Psalm of David; when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed. 34

I will bless the LORD at all times: 1

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20. The last strophe. If the antiphonal arrangement was adopted in the previous couplets the whole choir would join in chanting these closing words of thanksgiving.

R. V. reads **hath waited:** perhaps better, 'waiteth patiently for Jehovah.' The spirit of the closing stanza implies that there was still need to tarry in hope. Further coincidence with Deut. xxxiii. 29 is found in the use of the words **help** and **shield** as applied to God.

21. his holy name: the manifestation of the Divine character, holiness implying the sum of all moral excellence. Compare Ps. xxx. 4.

22. A touching prayer, often embodied in liturgical use, as at the close of the *Te Deum* and in separate versicles. No plea is felt to be more availing than that the suppliant has waited and hoped and trusted. The Psalmist, like the prophet, is assured that 'they that wait for Jehovah shall not be ashamed,' Isa. xlix. 23.

PSALM XXXIV. JOY IN JEHOVAH AT ALL TIMES.

An acrostic Psalm, the couplets in regular order beginning with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet successively; except that *Vav* is omitted and an additional couplet is found at the end, beginning with *Pe*. In all these respects it corresponds with Ps. xxv.

According to the title, it was written by David at the time described in 1 Sam. xxi. 11, when he feigned madness at the court of the Philistine king. The king, however, is called in the history Achish, and various conjectures have been made to account for the name Abimelech in the title. The most plausible of these is that Abimelech, like Pharaoh, may have been the title of a dynasty, while Achish was a personal name. This, however, is pure conjecture, and the discrepancy does not strengthen our confidence in the trustworthiness of the titles, which on other grounds are seen to be of doubtful authority. Certainly we should not

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD:
The meek shall hear thereof, and be glad.
3 O magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt his name together.
4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
5 They looked unto him, and were lightened:
And their faces shall never be confounded.

---

expect *a priori* that when in peril of his life amongst the Philistines David would write an acrostic poem, containing hardly any im- mediate allusion to his strange circumstances, and couched in a didactic style remarkably like the 'proverbs' of later centuries. Delitzsch thinks that the very variation of names points to an independent line of tradition, and suggests the Annals of David, one of the sources from which the Books of Samuel were compiled. It may be so; but all critical probability points to an error in the title.

There is, as might be expected in an acrostic, no clearly dis- cernible outline of thought, but the Psalm divides itself naturall into two parts, verse 11 beginning a didactic strain, such as teacher uses in addressing his disciples.

1. Hardly any phrase is more characteristic of the Psalter tha the opening of this Psalm. It is the praise at *all* times which i difficult to compass, but which is so largely realized by th Psalmists as to make Bacon's contrast between 'hearse-like air and carols' inappropriate. The language of this Psalm covers al kinds of experiences.

2. Meek is perhaps the best translation open to us for *'anavim* But it inadequately conveys the idea of 'the quiet in the land, who show their fortitude by patient trust in Jehovah when th main current of authority and influence sets full against them.

3. The language of these verses, inviting co-operation and unite praise on the part of all those who fear Jehovah, is much mor appropriate in (say) the period of the later Monarchy, or the Exile than in the lips of David addressing his followers. To 'exalt th name of Jehovah' is to celebrate His glory in every way possible as Delitzsch expresses it, 'to place God's exalted name as high i one's heart, in word, and in deed, as it is in itself.'

4–6. Three parallel statements are made in these three verses which may be compared and contrasted. Experience is quoted— in the first instance **I,** &c., in the second **They,** &c., in the thir

This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, 6
And saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them 7
  that fear him,
And delivereth them.
O taste and see that the LORD is good : 8

'This afflicted man.' The modes of entreaty are (1) 'sought earnestly,' (2) looked, (3) cried. The relief given is described by the phrases (1) 'He heard and delivered'; (2) 'They were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed'; (3) 'Jehovah heard and saved him from his troubles.'

Doubtless the person in the first instance is the Psalmist. In he second 'they' should be understood impersonally : we have no word in English corresponding to the German *man* and the French *on*; or, as frequently in Hebrew, the subject may be supplied from the predicate itself—'They who looked, when they did so, were lightened.' In the third instance it has been supposed that 'this afflicted one' means the Psalmist, but it is much better to understand it as a particular example of a general principle, a case which has happened again and again.

The deliverance from fear, the brightening of the anxious countenance and banishing of disappointment or despair, and the complete salvation out of all straits and distresses, are proofs of Divine help in time of need which speak for themselves.

7. The angel of Jehovah mentioned in a number of passages n the O. T. must not be confounded with an ordinary single messenger of the heavenly host. In Gen. xvi, xxii; Exod. iii; udges ii, v, vi, xiii, and other places, the phrase evidently inicates a special theophany or manifestation of the Divine presence. The being in question is identified with God, and exercises the rerogatives of God, yet he is distinct from God. In Isa. lxiii. 9 e is called 'the angel of His presence,' and the idea throughout seems to be that a special manifestation was granted to assure srael that the fullness of the Divine presence and favour was with hem. See Exod. xxiii. 20, xxxii. 34, and xxxiii. 14, 15. A areful reader will find in the language used, not an anticipation f the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, nor a distinction of persons within the Godhead, but a preparation for a fuller idea of Deity han the solitary God of Islam, a God who reveals Himself and ommunicates Himself, such a God as in the N. T. becomes ncarnate.

For the notion of a Divine camp of deliverance compare Gen. xxxii. 2 and 2 Kings vi. 17.

8. The hortatory tone of verse 3 is resumed. The Psalmist

Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
9 O fear the Lord, ye his saints:
For there is no want to them that fear him.
10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger:
But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.
11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me:
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
12 What man is he that desireth life,
And loveth *many* days, that he may see good?

---

invites others to share his own happy experience. Taste an sight represent spiritual perception in its more intimate forms.

9. ye his saints: not, as often, those who have entered int covenant relation with God, but those who are in character holy a phrase very unlikely to be found in the lips of David addressin the motley company whom he had gathered round him in the cav of Adullam.

10. young lions: a proverbial phrase for those best able t provide for themselves by strength and courage. The words o this verse were the last transcribed by Columba, the mediaeva saint and missionary, who said on the morning of his death tha his Lord would call him ere midnight. In the afternoon h entered with one of his companions the wattled hut of the monas tery and continued his transcription of the Psalms. When h reached this verse, he said, '"They shall not want any goo thing"—that is a good place for me to stop. The next vers belongs to my successors.'

11. Render, 'Come, my sons, hearken to me'; the wor **children** is ambiguous, and has been removed in R.V. from th passage in Proverbs which forms a close parallel with this. N children in years are intended, but those who are prepared listen to the speaker as a teacher, see Prov. v. 7, &c. The **fear** **Jehovah** is often dwelt upon in the Book of Proverbs, where is represented as the beginning of wisdom, the chief part knowledge (i. 7 and ix. 10), the very foundation of sterli character.

12. The phrases of this verse are also characteristic 'Proverbs,' e.g. **life** for that which is life indeed, Prov. viii. 3 and for long life, see Prov. iii. 2, x. 27. The exhortation of the verses is quoted at length in 1 Pet. iii. 10–12.

13. Another feature of similarity in the Psalmist's teachi with that of 'the wise' is the warning against sins of the tong Prov. xviii. 21, xxi. 23. Such counsel is needed at all times, b

Keep thy tongue from evil, 13
And thy lips from speaking guile.
Depart from evil, and do good; 14
Seek peace, and pursue it.
The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, 15
And his ears are *open* unto their cry.
The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, 16
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
The righteous cried, and the LORD heard, 17
And delivered them out of all their troubles.
The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, 18

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t would be strangely placed as an address of the persecuted)avid to his warrior companions. It belongs to another state of ociety and another type of teacher, such as the son of Sirach, nd James in his Epistle.

14. Righteousness is enjoined, negatively in the avoidance of vil, positively in the practice of good; whilst **peace** is to be ultivated in the sense of a kindly disposition towards neighbours, s contrasted with the violence and fraud of which the Psalmists so ften complain. That this will need effort and must be pursued ; often suggested; compare Paul's 'as much as in you lieth,' om. xii. 18.

15, 16. Render,

> **The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous,**
> **And his ears are toward their cry;**

hilst His 'face is against' the evil-doers. In the passage of ie Red Sea the pillar of fire and cloud propitiously guided rael, but discomfited the Egyptians as the Lord 'looked forth' gainst them. For the perishing of the very remembrance of the icked compare ix. 6.

17. As the text stands the translation should be 'They cried,' ith the impersonal use of 'they' noted in verse 5. The LXX id Vulg., however, read 'The righteous cry,' both words ginning with *Tsade*, the characteristic letter of this verse. A ansposition of verses 15 and 16 has been proposed, which wever does not seem greatly to mend matters.

18. The afflicted ones of this verse are such as are often entioned in the later Psalms and in Jeremiah, men who have ssed through sorrow and learned its lessons. The words nployed lie on the borderland between condition and character;

And saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.
19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous:
But the LORD delivereth him out of them all.
20 He keepeth all his bones:
Not one of them is broken.
21 Evil shall slay the wicked:
And they that hate the righteous shall be condemned.
22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants:
And none of them that trust in him shall be condemned.

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the **broken heart** and **contrite spirit** are crushed by sorrow, softened in penitence, and so prepared for better things. Compare Isa. lvii. 15, lxvi. 2.

19. The closing verses of the Psalm present a series o contrasts between the fate of the righteous and the wicked cast in the antithetical form so familiar in the Book of Proverbs illustrated also in Psalm i. This verse recognizes that th children of the kingdom must suffer tribulation, which is a advance upon more primitive ideas that good fortune alway accompanies goodness. The providence of God is shown i their deliverance.

20. Preservation in calamity, followed by deliverance, i intended, not entire immunity from trouble. The **bones** ma be strained and racked, but the life will be preserved. It i possible, though not probable, that this passage is quoted i John xix. 36, 'A bone of him shall not be broken.' The evangelis probably refers to Exod. xii. 46.

21, 22. The word for **slay** is a strong one, an intensiv conjugation being used. The versions render, 'The death of th wicked is evil,' or 'most evil,' following perhaps a differen reading; Delitzsch translates shall 'throttle,' 'the evil whic he loved and cherished shall be the hangman's power to which h falls a prey.' But **evil** means rather the punishment whic overtakes the wicked: whether it strangle, or drown, or sta it is certain to be fatal, and terribly so.

The word translated in A. V. 'desolate,' in R. V. **condemne** means to be pronounced guilty and treated as such. The A. sounds more picturesque and impressive in English, but it do not convey the meaning of the Hebrew. The R. V. is seen to b more impressive, as well as more accurate, when it is borne i mind that the sentence of the Judge of the whole earth is intende An anticipation may be found here of that solemn and etern parting to the right hand and the left of which Christ speaks

A Psalm of David. **35**

Strive thou, O LORD, with them that strive with me : 1
Fight thou against them that fight against me.

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the parable of the sheep and the goats. Stern sentence is pronounced upon all those who love evil and hate the righteous, whilst a gracious acquittal and acceptance is accorded to those who take refuge in Jehovah. They will be preserved from condemnation and its dire consequences now and evermore.

PSALM XXXV. A PLEA AGAINST PERSECUTORS.

The position of the writer of this Psalm is obvious enough. He is surrounded by cruel enemies, from whose hands he had deserved better things. He is in danger of his life, and is firmly convinced that the success of the plots against him will be injurious to the cause of righteousness. It is not quite so clear, however, who these enemies are. Some have drawn the conclusion from verse 15 that foreigners were included amongst them, but this is very doubtful; see the note on that verse.

It is impossible from these data to decide the question of date and authorship. Opinions vary chiefly between David during Saul's persecution and an author of the time of Jeremiah; whilst modern critics who refuse to place any Psalms before the Exile assign this to the later Persian or Greek period. In favour of the Davidic authorship may be alleged (1) a general similarity of circumstances; (2) a coincidence of phraseology between verse 1 and 1 Sam. xxiv. 15, 'Jehovah be my judge and plead my cause,' &c.; and (3) the position of the Psalm in the First Book. But on his hypothesis the whole of David's complaint is directed against number of persons, the description of whom in the Psalm hardly orresponds with such of Saul's counsellors or partisans as might e supposed to be intended, while there is no allusion to the one ne whose rage and envy were the fount and origin of the whole ersecution. On the other hand, the number of coincidences etween the language of this Psalm and the Book of Jeremiah is very arge. The prophet may be in every case the borrower, but it is more natural to suppose that the parallels are due to a similarity in ircumstances between the prophet and the Psalmist. The conditions f David's persecution by Saul were in reality very different. There no reason to draw the date down to a period after the Exile.

On the apparently vindictive tone of verses 4-6, see the section n Imprecatory Psalms in vol. ii, also the notes on these verses elow. The attempt to give them a Messianic application is theo-gically unsound as well as exegetically incorrect, whilst it is credible that David should use such language in relation to Saul. he Psalm falls naturally into three parts. An appeal to Jehovah

2 Take hold of shield and buckler,
And stand up for mine help.
3 Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them
that pursue me:
Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.
4 Let them be ashamed and brought to dishonour that
seek after my soul:

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to do justice in the case of these cruel and evil men, verses 1-10; a description of their base ingratitude and prayer for deliverance, 11-18; renewed prayer, especially on the ground of the harm which their victory would do to the cause of right, 19-28. This strophe, like each of the preceding, ends with a protestation on the part of the Psalmist of his allegiance to Jehovah, and the thanksgivings he will offer if his prayer be heard.

1. Strive in this verse must be understood of a contest in a court of law; the parallel clause uses the figure of an actual fight on a battlefield. The coincidence in phraseology with 1 Sam xxiv. 15 is not very remarkable, inasmuch as the idea of God's 'pleading the cause' of His servants is not uncommon, see 1 Sam. xxv. 39; Job x. 2; Isa. xlix. 25. It is still more usual to speak of God as the judge in such a cause, but the details of the figure here, as if God were only an advocate, are of course not to b pressed.

2, 3. The figure of the warrior is continued. Two kinds o **shield** are mentioned, see note on Ps. v. 12; also the **spear** whic the Divine Champion is to draw out from its place in the stand o arms and use in defence of the suppliant. The spear (*chanith*) is t be distinguished from the javelin, which was thrown (Job xli. 29) and from the lance, a lighter weapon.

In the second clause the translation of A. V. and R. V., **stop th way,** is to be preferred to that of R. V. marg., which by a differen pointing of the Hebrew introduces a mention of the 'battle-axe Heb. *sagar*, understood by some to correspond to the Persia 'sagaris' and the 'maul' or hammer mentioned in Jer. li. 20, bu by Cheyne, after Horsley, as a short dagger or dirk. But a Baethgen urges, there is no mention elsewhere of a Hebre weapon of this name, and though the ellipsis of the word 'way is abrupt, the most probable interpretation is that of our version Thus in verse 1 the enemy are in pursuit, in 2 and 3 the arme Defender has arisen and blocked the way against them, while i verse 4 they are routed in utter confusion.

4. The Psalmist prays that this overthrow may be complet He uses stern and relentless language, but is not animated b

Let them be turned back and confounded that devise
  my hurt.
Let them be as chaff before the wind, 5
And the angel of the LORD driving *them* on.
Let their way be dark and slippery, 6
And the angel of the LORD pursuing them.
For without cause have they hid for me their net *in* a pit, 7
Without cause have they digged *a pit* for my soul.
Let destruction come upon him at unawares; 8
And let his net that he hath hid catch himself:

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personally vindictive spirit, as is clear from verses 12–14 and 19. t is the triumph of righteousness which he desires to see consummated, and he paints the picture of an army in retreat with the tmost force and vividness.

5, 6. The defeat here described is such as Joshua was enabled o win over the Gibeonites at Beth-horon, a pass noted in history or battles, and lending itself naturally to the headlong rout of beaten foe. The figure of a thunderstorm such as aided Joshua Joshua x. 11) seems, moreover, to be present before the imagination of the Psalmist. Compare Jer. xxiii. 12, 'as slippery places the darkness.'

The mention of the **angel of Jehovah** makes these maledictions be much more terrible than the mere description of overthrow ould imply; in our ears it sounds like cursing pure and simple. uch language is defensible only on the supposition—which the salmist takes for granted—that his is the cause of righteousness d his enemies are the very representatives of evil. But even so, ere is a note of ruthlessness in such imprecations as these when tered against fellow men, which is foreign to the whole spirit of e New Testament.

7, 8. The figures change in the description of the attacks made the Psalmist's enemies. They are here represented as laying ares and digging pitfalls that they may entrap him and take his e. The use in these verses of the singular number **him, he, mself,** does not point to an individual foe, the words must be derstood collectively. This seems clear from the whole tenor the Psalm; in some other cases the Psalmist undoubtedly has view an individual, 'the head and front' of his assailants; here ere is no such particularization. The Psalmist does not hesitate retaliate in spirit and to invoke upon his adversaries retribution rresponding to their offences against him—'an eye for an eye, ooth for a tooth.' Let them suffer, as they would have made me

With destruction let him fall therein.
9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD:
It shall rejoice in his salvation.
10 All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee,
Which deliverest the poor from him that is too stron
for him,
Yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him
11 Unrighteous witnesses rise up;
They ask me of things that I know not.
12 They reward me evil for good,
To the bereaving of my soul.

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suffer, is a prayer from which the writers of the Psalms do no shrink.

9, 10. The closing strophe of the first stanza. It affords reli from the dark pictures which have filled the foregoing verses, a the Psalmist describes the pious joy with which he will celebrat his own deliverance. His **soul,** his inmost nature, and his **bone** all the framework of his body, will rejoice. He knows, moreove to whom his safety will be due, and his thanksgiving will tak a form adopted by other rescued saints, from the time of th Exodus onwards, in the cry, **Who is like unto thee, Jehovah** The Hebrew word *Micah* (= Micaiah) means 'Who is like Jehovah, and a well-known example of this exclamation is found in Mica vii. 18.

The positive side of the deliverance, the salvation of 'the po from him that spoileth him,' is pleasant to dwell upon, but it mu not be forgotten that the complete overthrow of the spoiler w necessary if deliverance was to be effective.

11. The second portion of the Psalm provides abundant reaso for the Psalmist's strong indignation and resentment. The prese tenses—'Malicious witnesses rise up,' &c.—graphically descri the treacherous dealing which has taken place in the past and still being carried on. Falsehood, base ingratitude, and invetera malice have been manifested by his enemies. Such false accus tions were made against David by Saul, against Jeremiah by t princes of the court, and against many a righteous sufferer und the Old Covenant. So, too, the phrase **They ask me of thin that I know not** recalls the false witness against Stephen d scribed in Acts vi. 13 and against Christ in Mark xiv. 56.

12. The present tense here is best understood literally. 'Th are requiting me evil for good—bereavement to my soul!' A m

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was 13
  sackcloth :
I afflicted my soul with fasting ;
And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my 14
  brother :
I bowed down mourning, as one that bewaileth his
  mother.

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alsely accused, and without defender and helper, is worse than an rphan ; his very soul dwells in bitter loneliness. There is a close oincidence between the phrase used here and Saul's confession n 1 Sam. xxiv. 17 that he had ungratefully requited David's agnanimity, but the Psalmist still uses the plural number 'They,' which we can hardly understand David's doing if he were the uthor of the Psalm and referred to Saul.

13. How different had been the conduct of the Psalmist! He ad prayed and fasted when his enemies were in trouble, desiring o do his utmost to help them.

The last clause of this verse, **my prayer returned into mine wn bosom,** is obscure. Several different explanations have been iven. (1) Ewald and Delitzsch—so also apparently A. V. and R. V.—understand that in the attitude of grief and supplication the ead was bent over the breast, and the prayer as it were fell back nto the bosom. (2) Kirkpatrick translates 'My prayer shall eturn,' i. e. shall not be unrewarded, but shall bring a blessing to he offerer. So substantially Cheyne ; who, however, would mend the text. Perhaps the best rendering is (3) 'My prayer—ay it return into my bosom!' So Perowne, who comments, 'The rayer I offered for them is a prayer I might have offered for yself. So true a prayer was it, so full of love, that I could wish othing more than that the blessings I asked for them should be ouchsafed to me.' This fits best with the context, which goes on compare the Psalmist's sorrow for his enemies with the sympathy hich friend feels for friend, or a son for his mother. The ndering may appear somewhat far-fetched, but if the Hebrew xt be sound, some periphrasis is necessary to explain a phrase hich is obscure through its brevity.

14. The outward signs of mourning are always conspicuous in e East. Unwashed face and garments of sackcloth, neglected ir and beard, drooping head, dejected mien and gait, are mongst the signs mentioned in such passages as Isa. lviii. 5 ; Sam. xix. 24.

15 But when I halted they rejoiced, and gathered themselve
together:
The abjects gathered themselves together against me
and I knew *it* not;
They did tear me, and ceased not:
16 Like the profane mockers in feasts,
They gnashed upon me with their teeth.
17 Lord, how long wilt thou look on?
Rescue my soul from their destructions,
My darling from the lions.
18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation:
I will praise thee among much people.

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15. 'At my halting,' i. e. when my foot slipped and I wa ready to fall, as in Ps. xxxviii. 16, 17. The second line run literally, 'They gathered, smiting, and I knew it not.' The translation of A. V. and R. V., **abjects,** accepted by many interpreter depends on a passive meaning of the word *nekim* = smitten, i. e afflicted, wretched and worthless. An emendation of the tex accepted by Baethgen, Cheyne, and others, reads 'foreigners instead of 'abjects.' This is suggested by the clause 'I knew not but is not borne out by the general drift of the Psalm. Th simplest meaning is probably nearest the mark. Render, 'The gather together, smiting me unawares'; in their insidious attac they stabbed him, as it were, in the back with calumnies, se verse 11.

In the last line 'They tear me' describes metaphorically th wounds inflicted by slanderous tongues—in our own idiom, 'te a reputation to tatters.' This meaning supports the interpretatio just given of the preceding clause.

16. *Lit.* 'like profane cake-jesters,' i. e. buffoons ready t indulge in any kind of ribald folly to secure a good meal. 'Vi sycophants' would be the corresponding modern phrase. Or w may render, 'After the fashion of profane parasites they gnas upon me with their teeth,' either grinning in malicious scorn o like gluttons, greedy to devour.

17. My darling (marg. 'My only one'), i. e. my one only lif synonymous with 'soul' in the preceding clause. The descriptio of the enemies as lions seems to explain the gnashing of teeth an eagerness to devour or destroy.

18. The second portion of the Psalm ends, like the fir (verse 9), with a declaration of the Psalmist's readiness to prai

Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice 19
over me:
Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without
a cause.
For they speak not peace: 20
But they devise deceitful words against them that are
quiet in the land.
Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me; 21
They said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.
Thou hast seen it, O Lord; keep not silence: 22
O Lord, be not far from me.

God and publish His glory in every way possible, if deliverance may but be vouchsafed him.

19. The third stanza does but renew the complaint, the petition and the promised thanksgiving of the former two. Indignation, however, is subsiding, and confidence in God is increasing.

To **wink with the eye,** *lit.* to 'bite the eyes,' i.e. suddenly to close them in contempt or derision, may be a sign of mischief, see Prov. vi. 13, or of exultation over the success of wicked plots. The latter is the meaning here.

They **that hate me without a cause:** this may be the clause quoted by Christ as from 'their law' in John xv. 25, or Ps. lxix. 4 may be referred to, or the allusion may be more general to many passages which describe the causeless hatred of the wicked for he innocent.

20. The fable of the wolf and the lamb illustrated. Those who hemselves are anything but peaceable accuse 'the quiet in the and' of causing disturbance, and plot against their peace. The word 'quiet' in this sense occurs only here. It is synonymous with lowly—it is so rendered in the Syrian version—and denotes he humble righteous in contradistinction to the arrogant evil-doers.

21. The gesture of opening wide the mouth may indicate ither (1) the gaping and gloating of malice over misfortune; r (2) contempt, as when lip and tongue are protruded in xxii. 7; sa. lvii. 4. The former seems to be the meaning here; they cry We have seen it,' i.e. our desire is gratified by the spectacle of he sufferer's wretchedness. See also verse 25.

22. A fine turn to this taunting phrase of his enemies is given y the Psalmist's reverent faith. He cries, **Thou hast seen it, ehovah:** prove therefore that Thou art neither blind nor dumb y the manifestation of Thy presence and the utterance of Thy

23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgement,
Even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.
24 Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness;
And let them not rejoice over me.
25 Let them not say in their heart, Aha, so would we have it:
Let them not say, We have swallowed him up.
26 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that rejoice at mine hurt:
Let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.
27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause:
Yea, let them say continually, The LORD be magnified,
Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

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voice. 'Thou God seest me' may be the terrified utterance of ar awakened conscience, or the calm plea of an assured trust.

23, 24. 'Awake, yea, arouse thyself!' Such anthropomorphi expressions, when found in psalms and prophecies, can surel only mislead the unwary. The Psalmist does not imagine tha God is asleep, but he longs and prays for a proof that there i indeed a God who judges in the earth. Only a clear conscienc could prompt the petition to be judged according to the Divin righteousness.

25. *Lit.* 'Aha, our desire!' (R. V. marg.) i. e. what we longe for, now we have. The shameful delight which the wicked fee in the ruin of the righteous springs largely from an uneas conscience. Such overthrow seems to show that God has no seen and will not judge.

26, 27. In contrast with the petition of verse 26, which i almost a repetition of verse 4, the Psalmist asks that those ma be gratified who 'delight in my righteousness,' which, as R. V marg. shows, is the literal form of the phrase **favour m righteous cause.** This prayer is the more likely to be grante because the Psalmist is bold enough to say that Jehovah delight in his prosperity. If God is magnified, so will the righteous caus of the Psalmist be, and therefore he prays for the triumph of a who desire this consummation.

And my tongue shall talk of thy righteousness, 28
And of thy praise all the day long.

For the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David the servant 36
of the LORD.

The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, 1

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28. He himself, of course, will share this joy. Hence he once more announces that if the opportunity be granted to him he will gratefully use it to the uttermost, giving thanks for deliverance vouchsafed.

my tongue shall talk, &c. The word translated 'talk' is in i. 4 and elsewhere rendered 'meditate'—'speak musingly' (Cheyne). The line which divides thought from speech is soon crossed when the mind is delighted with its theme. The brimming cup readily overflows. In verse 18 God's praise was to be made known over a wide area, to many people; here it is to be celebrated unceasingly, 'all the day long.' Abundant gratitude will find abundant expression, Ps. cxlv. 7.

PSALM XXXVI. THE SINFULNESS OF SIN AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

The two parts into which this Psalm obviously falls—verses 1–4 nd 5–12—are strongly contrasted, both in theme and style. The ormer describes the evil of evil, the latter the lovingkindness of God. The former part is rugged and obscure; in the latter the diction is clear, melodious, and beautiful. The transition, moreover, s not effected gradually and naturally, but with an abruptness which has naturally led to the supposition that parts of originally eparate Psalms are here united. This is a probable, but not necessary, hypothesis. As Prof. Kirkpatrick says, the two parts may be 'related like the two members of an antithetic proverb, nd the reader left to interpret the connexion for himself.' And t may be, as others have suggested, that the Psalmist's style varies with the varying theme, and labours in the attempt to set forth he tangled obscurities of the wicked man's thoughts, while it soars asily in delighted meditation upon the Divine love and goodness. till, the two halves of an antithetic proverb are not distinguished n style and phraseology as are these verses; nor can it be taken s inherently probable that a crabbed style would be adopted in escribing evil and a smoother flow of words in praising God. portions of Psalms have often been blended, and if internal vidence is to guide us, it would appear that one example of such ombination is before us. It is not pretended, however, that uch reasoning is conclusive, the Psalm may well now be studied a whole. The two parts are easily connected in thought, and

There is no fear of God before his eyes.
2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes,
That his iniquity shall not be found out and be hated.

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no one can deny that the effect of the description, both of the wickedness of the wicked and the goodness of God, is heightened by the close juxtaposition of such sharply contrasted strains.

The title describes David as 'the servant of Jehovah,' and some have found a reference to the phrase 'his servant' in xxxv. 27. But the date is probably much later than the time of David; the state of society described would suggest rather the period of the later Monarchy.

1. Two translations of the first line are possible, according to whether the Massoretic text be closely adhered to or not. If it is, **The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart** means that the Psalmist is able to penetrate into the motives and hidden springs of the wicked man's actions, and trace all to an utter lack of religion and godly fear. This, however, is strained and unsatisfactory. A more literal translation, together with the adoption of a various reading found in several versions and noted in R. V. marg., would give us, 'The transgression of the wicked uttereth its oracle within his heart.' But what is 'sin's oracle,' and what does it say? The second line may be viewed either as containing the substance of this oracle, or as a comment of the Psalmist upon the statement of the first line. The peculiarity lies in the use of a sacred word like *neum*, reserved for specially solemn and oracular utterances of Jehovah, to describe the guilty whispers of sin in the wicked man's heart. The irony is bold, but not unparalleled. Olshausen's suggested emendation, accepted by Cheyne, to supply as in xiv. 1 the clause 'that there is no God,' as the declaration of this dark oracle, may be accepted as giving the meaning, which, however, is more forcibly expressed by the ellipsis implied in the text as we have it. Sin is the inspiring deity which directs the inmost thoughts of the wicked man; it breathes its own foul secrets into his inner ear—a kind of parody of the sacred message given from time to time by God to His servants, the 'Black Mass' of an apostate priest. Hence, adds the Psalmist, no wonder that all reverence for God and Divine things is absent from such a shrine.

2. Another obscure verse. What is the subject to 'flattereth'—God, transgression, or the man himself? R. V. text implies the last, the two other alternatives are given in the margin. Perowne and Cheyne amongst English expositors understand 'God flatters,' or deals smoothly with the wicked. But both the usage of the word and the context are against this. If 'my heart' be retained in verse 1, as in A.V. and R.V., the wicked man must be understood

The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: 3
He hath left off to be wise *and* to do good.
He deviseth iniquity upon his bed; 4
He setteth himself in a way that is not good;
He abhorreth not evil.

Thy lovingkindness, O LORD, is in the heavens; 5
Thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the skies.

---

as flattering himself, the Psalmist thus carrying on his analysis of the wicked man's ideas and motives. But if, with the best interpreters, 'his heart' be read in verse 1, we should render, 'For it (transgression) flattereth him in his eyes, that his iniquity shall not be found out and be hated.' The whole passage then furnishes a striking statement of the deceitfulness of sin. It whispers in low mysterious tones within the soul, as if it were a revelation from another world, that there is no need to be afraid of a God who, if He exists, takes little notice of transgression; and it casts a glamour over the eyes, persuading the man that none shall ever discover and draw attention to the hateful thing.

3, 4. If these are the thoughts of a man's heart, it is easy to guess what his words and deeds will be. They are now described in five clauses. (1) His words are false and evil; (2) negatively, he gives up all wise and beneficent action such as used to be his; (3) positively, he plans evil devices in hours of meditation; (4) he carries out these plans systematically, so that evil becomes the habit of his life; and (5) worst of all—though many might not think it so—the end is that the evil becomes a part of the man himself, and excites in him none of that loathing and detestation which the pure heart and tender conscience ever entertain for it. With this description may be compared that of Ps. i. 1 and many passages of Proverbs, e. g. ii. 12-15. In spite of some obscurities, there are few passages in the O. T. which so searchingly analyse and so impressively portray the corruption of the inner nature, and the outward life of the man who casts off the fear of God as a ruling principle of life.

5. With rapid flight, like a bird released from some foul earthly cage or entangling nets and nooses, the Psalmist rises skywards. There, in the heavens and beyond them, in the skies and above them, are the **lovingkindness** and the **faithfulness** of God—twin qualities which assure to all who trust in Him that He will fulfil His promises and that these are full of grace and comfort. The mention of the skies is intended here, as in Ps. ciii. 11; Isa. lv. 9, to indicate the infinite, immeasurable character of Divine truth and love.

6 Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God;
Thy judgements are a great deep:
O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.
7 How precious is thy lovingkindness, O God!
And the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings.
8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house;
And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

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6. For an illustration of other attributes the Psalmist turns to earth and the sublimest objects of nature around—the mountains and the ocean. **Righteousness** is that absolutely just and equitable character which leads to **judgements** or righteous acts. The latter are not to be considered only in our modern sense of the word 'judgement,' as visitations of wrath, though these are included. The **mountains of God**—compare 'trees of God,' civ. 16, and 'river of God,' lxv. 9—are the very symbol of lofty stability and majestic security; the great deep is profound, mysterious, all-encompassing. In both features of the landscape are found elements which take us beyond ourselves, which we cannot measure and fathom, but which we recognize as helping to constitute the great, beneficent order in which we live. The last line of this verse might seem to present an anti-climax. But the clause **thou preservest man and beast** serves to show how the very greatness and glory of the Divine attributes are pledged to what might seem the humble task of securing the safety and happiness of God's creatures, even the meanest of them. This thought forms a natural transition to the next verse.

7. Two or three slight changes in R.V. form a decided improvement on A. V. in this verse. 'Excellent' is replaced by **precious,** for the Psalmist wishes to show the value of the treasure thus placed at the disposal of men. **And** is better than 'Therefore'; the second clause is not a deduction from the first, but an explicative addition to it. **Take refuge** is better than 'put their trust': and it would have been well if the force of the phrase **the children of men,** *frail and mortal as they are*, could have been brought out, for the Hebrew implies this.

8. A still stronger and fuller statement of the joys of spiritual communion, under the figure of God as Host receiving His worshippers in His temple and regaling them with the *Shelamim*, the

For with thee is the fountain of life: 9
In thy light shall we see light.
O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; 10
And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.
Let not the foot of pride come against me, 11
And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.

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peace-offerings or sacrificial meal, which in all Semitic religions symbolized the Divine favour and bounty (Lev. vii. 15).

Render :—

'They are satisfied from the rich provision of thy house;
And of the river of thy delights dost thou make them drink.'

9. A still more lofty spiritual utterance, one of the most sublime in the O. T. In the combined simplicity of the words and profundity of the thought we are reminded of St. John, as indeed two of his favourite and often repeated words, **life** and **light,** are the key-words of this verse. Jeremiah (ii. 13) uses a similar phrase, 'fountain of living waters,' and contrasts it with men's 'broken cisterns,' just as in ch. xvii he describes not only the fruitfulness of the tree planted by the waters, as is done in Ps. i, but also the dryness and barrenness of the man who is as the heath in the desert.

Light furnishes the purest and brightest of all metaphors in man's attempt to set forth the blessedness of the beatific vision; hence its frequent use in Dante's Paradise. But as St. John emphasizes the fact that the man who walks in light, or purity, holds fellowship with God, so the Psalmist shows that by fellowship with God men are to realize all the purity and joy of which the present life is capable. The pellucid simplicity of these great words makes all comment mean and futile.

10. In the closing stanza the Psalmist applies to his own condition the great truths on which he has been meditating, and prays that God will manifest His attributes of **lovingkindness** and **righteousness** so as to help himself and others who, in spite of wickedness in high places, are striving to be faithful. No man could write the preceding verses who had not himself experienced God's goodness, so his prayer is that God would **continue** His grace sufficiently to enable His saints to triumph.

11. The **foot of pride** implies that the wicked were in power, and likely to trample with the heel of oppression. **Let not the hand . . . drive me away** implies that they had the power to banish the Psalmist from his home, perhaps from his country. The literal meaning of the word is 'make to wander,' and it is used of Israel's exile in 2 Kings xxi. 8. But the oppression here

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen:
They are thrust down, and shall not be able to rise.

37 *A Psalm* of David.

1 Fret not thyself because of evil-doers,

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referred to seems to be that of private persons who 'covet houses and take them away,' Mic. ii. 2; who 'join house to house, till there be no room,' Isa. v. 8.

12. An abrupt transition, intelligible only to those who are able to take a sudden leap of faith. The Psalmist sees his prayer already more than answered. The perfect tenses show the evil-doers as already **fallen** and **thrust down**; whilst the graphic word **There** points as with outstretched finger to an already visible overthrow. One step more is taken in the last clause, 'and they cannot rise.' No resurrection is possible for those whom the God of righteous love overthrows, when He answers the prayers of His saints and thrusts down the powers of darkness for ever. So the song shall be sung in the land of Judah, concerning all its oppressors, 'They are dead, they shall not live; they are shades, they shall not rise,' Isa. xxvi. 14.

PSALM XXXVII. WAITING FOR JEHOVAH.

A didactic Psalm, akin in thought and style to portions of the Book of Proverbs, and showing points of connexion with Pss. i. and lxxiii. It is alphabetic in structure, each stanza consisting for the most part of four lines—occasionally of three or five—and each beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in regular succession. The subject is Providence, a vindication of the ways of God to man in respect of the prosperity of the wicked and the trials of the righteous. This great, wellnigh perennial, question receives various treatment in the O. T., and a progress of thought in relation to it can without much difficulty be discerned. For fuller treatment of the subject see vol. ii, Introduction. Here it may be said that at one stage of the history, what may be accounted as 'orthodox' Hebrew doctrine on the matter—that sooner or later in this life wickedness will be adequately punished and godliness rewarded—had not been seriously questioned. The Book of Job, however, represents a notable epoch in the history of O. T. theology on this head, presenting as it does a powerful and searching indictment of the prevailing view, and giving an answer, or answers, of its own to the ever-recurring question, Why do the righteous suffer?

The writer of this Psalm had evidently been tempted to doubt the justice and goodness of God, as he saw the comparative prosperity of men who made no pretension to religion, or even to

Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness.
For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, 2
And wither as the green herb.
Trust in the LORD, and do good; 3

---

ordinary morality. But the mental disturbance had not been very deep, and he quiets his own soul and those of his readers by the counsel to wait patiently for a while and the balance will ere long be redressed. It is to be remembered that, in the absence of any clear revelation concerning a future life, no relief could be obtained by an appeal to a great Day of Assize when final rewards and punishments shall be awarded according to a perfect law of righteousness. But the Psalmist believes that such righteous adjudication will take place in this life, and sin be visited either upon the wicked himself, or his posterity, or both. He enjoins therefore a pious attitude of reverent waiting for the Lord's time, and resting in Him as One whose moral government cannot fail, however little His ways are at present understood.

No regular progress of thought is discernible in this acrostic poem, though commentators have found a fourfold division, each part consisting of about ten verses; the first containing positive counsel 1–11, the second describing the doom that shall overtake the wicked 12–22, the third dwelling more on the reward to be given to the righteous 21–31, the fourth pointing out the final nature of retribution when it does come 32–40.

The nearest approach to fixing a date that can be made is to assign the Psalm to the later period of the Monarchy, as expressing the wisdom of 'the wise men' who taught and wrote about the time of Hezekiah.

1, 2. The excellent translation **Fret not thyself** represents a phrase which means literally 'make not thyself hot' (in anger) 'against evil-doers.' The temptation is either to blaze forth in indignation or sullenly chafe and 'fret' at the moral inequalities of life. In this case the latter is apparently intended. The Psalmist addresses those who had no power themselves to act, and were more likely to 'be envious'—*lit.* to glow with dull red heat—'of the workers of unrighteousness' in their ill-deserved success.

The first verse is repeated almost exactly in Prov. xxiv. 19, but the figure in the sequel is different. There the wise man says, 'The lamp of the wicked shall be put out'; here the Psalmist says he shall speedily perish like the grass. The whole Psalm is but an amplification of this opening quatrain.

3, 4. R.V. text and margin show that in this stanza, while

Dwell in the land, and follow after faithfulness.
4 Delight thyself also in the LORD;
And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
5 Commit thy way unto the LORD;
Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.
6 And he shall make thy righteousness to go forth as the light,

---

there is no doubt about the meaning of the first and fourth lines, the second and third may be rendered either as imperatives or as futures, either as precepts or descriptions of the blessing which obedience will bring. The Revisers are undoubtedly right in rendering both clauses in verse 3 as imperatives—**Trust** and **Dwell**; but there is much to be said for understanding both the clauses of verse 4 as promises:—

> 'So shalt thou find thy delight in Jehovah;
> And he shall give thee the petitions of thine heart.'

The positive cure for the disease of envy and impatience is inward trust and outward obedience; so far verse 3 is clear. In the latter part of the verse it is true that 'dwelling in the land' is usually (as in A. V.) regarded as a promise granted to the faithful. But the imperatives in both clauses can hardly be understood as futures, and the command must be understood as enjoining steady persistence in duty in the place where duty lies, like the prophet's assurance that those who believe 'shall not make haste' or be lightly disturbed.

Then, says the Psalmist, thou shalt find true happiness and satisfaction (1) in the presence and favour of Jehovah Himself; (2) in the lot and condition which He will grant in answer to prayer and in acknowledgement of loyal service.

5, 6. Commit, *lit.* 'Roll thy way upon Jehovah' (R. V. marg.); i. e. put off upon Him the burden of life, the anxiety which its problems cause and the load of care concerning its issues. For the figure of 'casting care' compare 1 Pet. v. 7. **He shall bring it to pass,** *lit.* 'He will do'—no object being specified, the meaning being 'all that is necessary.' Or more simply—Do thou trust, and He will act.

The object may be supplied from verse 6, the making manifest of the Psalmist's righteousness and the vindicating of the cause o truth being the object which he had most at heart. A fine description of the shining forth of righteousness after temporary obscuration is put into the mouth of Zophar, Job xi. 15-19 especially in verse 17, 'A day brighter than noon shall arise, and the very darkness be as the dawn of day.'

Palestinian Shepherd and Flock

And thy judgement as the noonday.
Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: 7
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: 8
Fret not thyself, *it tendeth* only to evil-doing.
For evil-doers shall be cut off: 9
But those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the land.
For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: 10
Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he shall not be.

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7. The stanza of *Daleth* has only three lines, and the variety gives relief. **Rest in the LORD,** *lit.* 'Be silent to Jehovah,' P.B.V. 'Hold thee still in the Lord.' The silence and patience here enjoined clearly imply passiveness only so far as the injurious action of 'fretting' is concerned. Thus to 'hush the soul as a weaned child' (Ps. cxxxi) is no easy task. It is not mere resignation, quiet waiting—the root implies being 'on the stretch'—it needs an effort of great spiritual strength. The repetition of the phrases found in the first verse is not mere tautology, the reiteration gives emphasis such as the subject needs. A large part of the power of the Psalm lies in the quiet but persistent pressing home of one idea.

8, 9. Here the false and foolish character of the anger is made plain. The A.V. misses the meaning in the second clause of verse 8; R.V., by supplying 'it tendeth,' brings out the Psalmist's meaning. It is very tersely expressed, but may be paraphrased—'Allow not thyself in what may seem to be hot indignation against unrighteousness, it leads only to unrighteousness itself in the end.' Wesley said that fretting is as bad as swearing.

9. It is doubtful whether in this verse and the four others mentioned in R.V. marg. we should render **inherit the land** or 'the earth.' The former gives more exactly the thought of the Psalmist, the latter gives a fuller meaning and links the Psalm with the New Testament. Verse 3 shows that the land of Canaan as the land of promise is meant in the first instance.

10, 11. A stronger statement of both sides of the contrast. The 'cutting off' of the wicked is expanded into the statement that they shall be swept away till no trace of them be left, while on the other hand a fuller promise is given to the righteous.

11 But the meek shall inherit the land;
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
12 The wicked plotteth against the just,
And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.
13 The Lord shall laugh at him:
For he seeth that his day is coming.
14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent
their bow;
To cast down the poor and needy,
To slay such as be upright in the way:
15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.

'They that wait on Jehovah' is changed into **the meek,** those who are 'quiet in the land,' xxxv. 20. These shall not only occupy the land which is their inheritance by right of obedience, but peace and prosperity shall abound to them. The Lord Jesus Christ uses the former part of verse 11 in the third beatitude, Matt. v. 5, but both the moral quality of meekness and the inheritance promised are spiritualized and deepened in the N. T. utterance.

12, 13. For the phrase **gnasheth upon him with his teeth,** see xxxv. 16. The fury of determined malice, of the wild beast only waiting for the moment to spring, is here intended. The superior might of Jehovah, who scorns this display of impotent rage and sees imminent the destruction of the would-be destroyer, is very striking. For the phrase **his day** compare 'his day shal come to die,' 1 Sam. xxvi. 10, and 'the day of Jerusalem,' Ps. cxxxvii 7, i. e. the day of its calamity and overthrow.

14, 15. Similar plotting and preparation of mischief is described to be followed by similar intervention and retribution. The poo and needy may sometimes have been in danger of actual violenc from **sword** and **bow,** but the drawing of the sword and bendin of the bow are phrases constantly used in the Psalms to represen metaphorically injury of all kinds.

upright in the way is not quite the meaning here. Th Hebrew says, 'the upright of way,' a phrase accurately rendere in A. V. 'such as be of upright conversation,' i. e. conduct a mod of life. Verse 15 shows in what form the judgement prophesie in verse 13 will come: the wild beast shall be himself devoured the archer shot through with his own dart.

Better is a little that the righteous hath 16
Than the abundance of many wicked.
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: 17
But the LORD upholdeth the righteous.
The LORD knoweth the days of the perfect: 18
And their inheritance shall be for ever.
They shall not be ashamed in the time of evil: 19
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
But the wicked shall perish, 20
And the enemies of the LORD shall be as the excellency
  of the pastures:
They shall consume; in smoke shall they consume away.

16, 17. Another of the many close parallels with Proverbs is observable here. Compare verse 16 with Prov. xv. 16 and xvi. 8. It is not easy to render the word *hāmōn*, translated in R. V. **abundance.** It means properly noise, as of a crowd, or a rush of waters, and 'suggests the idea of noisy, ostentatious opulence' (Kirkpatrick). The bluster of ostentation is feeble indeed when the power which lay behind it is broken. 'He whose arms are broken can neither harm others nor help himself' (Delitzsch). The strength of the righteous, on the other hand, lies in the might of Jehovah who 'upholds' him. The 'arms of his hands are made strong by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob,' Gen. xlix. 24.

18, 19. knoweth the days recalls the phraseology of i. 6. The knowledge here referred to includes the watchful care of Providential love. It may mean the days individually, and correspond o the 'numbering of the hairs' in the N. T., i. e. Jehovah watches he minutest detail of the lives of His servants; or, more generally, He cares for them to the end of life. The **inheritance** is that of the land' so often referred to in this Psalm, and it is retained **or ever,** because handed on from generation to generation of osterity. Not bare possession is promised, but abundant supply, o that in **the days of famine,** which in so many Eastern countries re far from being either rare or nominal, the righteous shall lack othing.

20. The stanza of *Caph* contains only three lines, and makes nother artistic break in the regular succession of couplets.

But, more correctly 'For'; 'on the contrary 'being understood. The Syriac, Targum, and other versions, including A. V., render as the fat of lambs,' a translation suggested perhaps by the

21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again:
But the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth.
22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the land;
And they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.
23 A man's goings are established of the LORD;
And he delighteth in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down:
For the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

mention of smoke, as of sacrifice, in the latter part of the verse This is now, however, almost universally abandoned in favour o 'the beauty of the meadows,' the somewhat unusual meaning o 'meadow' or 'pasture' being established by the use of the wor in Ps. lxv. 14 and Isa. xxx. 23. The fading of the flower and th vanishing of the smoke are figures of transience common to Home and the Psalter and early poetry in general. It is a mistake t join these two figures together, as if the smoke referred to wer that of dried grass burning, any more than that of lamb sacrificed.

21, 22. The close connexion of these two verses shows that i the former it is the poverty of the wicked and the increasin wealth of the righteous which is described. **The wicked borrow eth and payeth not again,** because he is unable, not because h is a rogue. In the second half of verse 21 render, 'The righteo dealeth generously'; A.V. is misleading in its translation 'showe mercy.' The kindly use which the good man makes of his su stance is here a secondary thought, the primary one is that he h abundance to give away. The promise concerning inheriting t land is repeated here: some commentators make of it a kind refrain, marking off separate sections of the Psalm.

23, 24. The emphasis here should be observed. 'It is fr Jehovah that a man's steps are established,' i.e. his feet ma strong to walk firmly and steadily. The word used warrants t gloss of A. V., 'a good man,' though it is better not to introduce into a translation. In the second line render, 'And in his w doth He take delight.' The whole of the context favours t meaning that God is pleased with the good man's life, rather th that the good man delights to walk according to God's precep But analogies may be found in the Psalms and Proverbs for bo interpretations. The thought throughout this quatrain is t the life of a good man viewed as a journey is one of steadfast p gress, even in spite of stumbles, because God is well pleased w him and supports him throughout.

I have been young, and now am old; 25
Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his seed begging *their* bread.
All the day long he dealeth graciously, and lendeth; 26
And his seed is blessed.
Depart from evil, and do good; 27
And dwell for evermore.
For the LORD loveth judgement, 28
And forsaketh not his saints;
They are preserved for ever:

25, 26. This utterance of personal experience must be interpreted reasonably. The Psalmist renders his testimony to the general rule that neither the righteous in their own lives nor their families are found in utter and permanent destitution. That they have to suffer privations is, so to speak, a part of his hypothesis, which appears in every mention of 'the afflicted.' The drift of the verse is similar to the appeal of the son of Sirach, 'Look at the generations of old and see: who did ever put his trust in the Lord and was ashamed?' Ecclus. ii. 10.

In verse 26 the emphasis is again to be laid on the fact that the righteous man possesses enough and to spare, but the generosity of his character is perhaps more prominent than in verse 21. The continuity of the generations, for good or for evil, is constantly noted in this Psalm. The doctrine of heredity in this sense was a part of the Hebrew 'orthodoxy' mentioned in the introduction above.

27. The often repeated proverbial precept, **Depart from evil,** &c., is followed by an imperative, **And dwell for evermore.** But the 'And,' as often in Hebrew, is equivalent to 'And so,' which gives to the command the effect of a promise, 'Thou shalt dwell.' It is better, however, as in verse 3, to translate literally and understand that the righteous man is bidden to do his duty as a citizen, and hold his ground as a faithful servant and representative of Jehovah in the land.

In verse 28 **saints** means those who are bound by covenant-ties to Jehovah and are faithful to their allegiance. This verse should end with the word 'saints': the stanza of *Ayin* consists of the quatrain made up of the latter half of verses 28 and 29, which we now proceed to consider.

28, 29. The clause **They are preserved for ever** does not, according to the received text, begin with *Ayin*, though by a slight and perhaps permissible elision of the first letter it may be made to

But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
29 The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell therein for ever.
30 The mouth of the righteous talketh of wisdom,
And his tongue speaketh judgement.
31 The law of his God is in his heart;
None of his steps shall slide.
32 The wicked watcheth the righteous,
And seeketh to slay him.
33 The Lord will not leave him in his hand,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.

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do so. But then neither in meaning nor connexion does the line fit into its place, and most modern commentators incline to follow the reading of the LXX and render:—

> 'The unrighteous are destroyed for ever:
> And the seed of the wicked are cut off,'

thus preserving the parallelism and the contrast with the two statements concerning the righteous in the former half of verses 28 and 29. Again, in our verse 29 occurs the 'refrain' concerning the inheritance of the righteous. It is rather, however, a reiterated aphorism than a poetical refrain.

30, 31. Stanza of *Pe*, devoted wholly to the righteous, and dealing with his inner life rather than his outward condition. Words are mentioned before thoughts, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The close connexion between thought and speech is hinted at in the two words used in verse 30, the former meaning to 'talk musingly' (xxxv. 28) and the latter sometimes meaning to think, as well as to speak. The explanation of Deut. vi. 7, 'Thou shalt talk of these words when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way,' &c., is found in the previous verse, 'They shall be in thine heart.' A close parallel is found here. Both words and steps, i. e. the details o conduct, are rightly ordered, because God's law is loved.

32, 33. The reference in both these verses seems to be to unjust earthly judgement. The form of oppression is not tha of open violence, but unfair use of power and authority. Th wicked man seeks for opportunities of unjust accusation, that h may press his advantage to the utmost, even to the taking awa of life. But 'one higher than the high regardeth; and there b higher than they'—as the Preacher says concerning men wh 'take away judgement and justice in a province,' Eccles. v. 8. Th

Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, 34
And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land:
When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.
I have seen the wicked in great power, 35
And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil.
But one passed by, and, lo, he was not: 36
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.
Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: 37
For the latter end of *that* man is peace.
As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed together: 38
The latter end of the wicked shall be cut off.

Judge of all will not suffer this perversion of justice, and His acquittal will secure release.

34. Another stanza of three lines. The repeated exhortations of this Psalm exhibit the didactic style characteristic of Proverbs, and found in a few Psalms. In this instance **his way** means, of course, the way of Jehovah, not as in verse 23. The prospect of seeing the overthrow of the wicked is not a matter of personal gratification, but it is held out as additional evidence of the whole thesis of the Psalm. Justice shall be done on earth, and the oppressed saints shall witness its triumph.

35, 36. Another personal testimony drawn from the Psalmist's own experience. He has seen happen that which he declares to be only an illustration of a universal law.

in great power is a somewhat tame translation of a strong expression. Render, 'I saw the wicked striking terror,' the whole scene being rendered more graphic by the preterite tense, And **one** (*or*, I) **passed by, and, lo, he was not.** Compare the use of the aorist in Jas. i. 11, where the description gains in vividness by being represented as a concrete fact in the past. The comparison to **a green tree in its native soil**, rooted as if it formed part of the landscape, points to the security of the tyrant, the apparent impossibility of shaking his power. Yet he vanished utterly. The LXX and other versions read, 'I passed by,' probably the correct reading.

37, 38. This stanza bids us contemplate the final issues of the 'two ways,' which have been described at length in the Psalm.

There is doubt about the meaning of the word *acharith* used in the latter clauses of verses 37 and 38. It is translated in A. V. 'end,' in R. V. **latter end**: while the margin gives 'reward,' or 'future,' or 'posterity.' Most of the best expositors adopt the last

39 But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD:
He is their strong hold in the time of trouble.
40 And the LORD helpeth them, and rescueth them:
He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them,
Because they have taken refuge in him.

38 A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.
1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath:

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meaning and render in verse 37, 'There is a posterity to the man of peace.' This rendering is certainly the easier in verse 38, but there is much to be said on the other side. The word is very seldom used of 'posterity,' Ps. cix. 13 being perhaps the best of some four instances adduced and itself by no means certain. The fundamental idea is not concrete but abstract, that of a 'sequel,' 'that which cometh after'; the notion of a final happy close to life, granted to the righteous, withheld from the wicked, seems to give the best meaning. Compare Prov. xxiii. 18, where there is similar ambiguity, and Ps. lxxiii. 17, which tells in favour of this rendering. It is not to be denied, however, that the mention of a 'latter end' leads naturally to the thought of posterity, that this *may* be intended here, as the best interpreters think it is, and the idea is quite in harmony with the teaching of the Psalm. Kirkpatrick says, 'To the Israelite, with his strong sense of the continuity of life in the family, childlessness or the loss of posterity was a virtual annihilation.' But the P. B. V. gives the meaning very simply, 'that shall bring a man peace at the last.'

39, 40. The opening word in this stanza does not actually begin with *Tav*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, but it virtually does so, the opening conjunction, represented by a single letter, being disregarded. The close of the Psalm is peaceful, as becomes its general character. This last stanza sets forth God as a source of safety, as a stronghold or shelter in which men may hide, as a helper in distress and a deliverer from danger and oppression. Those who believe in this may surely rest in Jehovah and wait patiently for Him: and when they have waited, wait.

PSALM XXXVIII. A SUFFERER'S PENITENTIAL PLEA.

The third of the 'Penitential Psalms.' Delitzsch holds that the first four of these are by David, and form a chronological series describing his repentance for his great sin in the matter o Bath-sheba and Uriah, to be read in this order—Pss. vi, xxxviii, li xxxii. On the other hand, the parallels with passages in Jeremiah are too close to be accidental, and many assign the Psalm to tha

Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

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prophet, or at least to his period. Cheyne says 'the speaker represents suffering Israel, who, though following after good, cannot be sinless before God.'

It seems clear in any case (1) that bodily sickness forms one element in the suffering. It is true that the strong expressions of verses 5-8 have been understood metaphorically, just as the prophets from time to time describe the moral corruption of Israel as disease. But it is simpler and sounder exegesis to take the obvious meaning. If this be done, it renders the Davidic origin less probable. But (2) trouble of mind and of circumstances is also included. The sufferer is deserted by his friends, verse 11, and hunted by his enemies, verse 12. And (3) these afflictions are recognized as a part of the punishment of sin. Conscience is troubled. A distinction must constantly be made between Psalms in which the plea for help is urged because the Psalmist is faithful to his religious allegiance and those in which sin is freely confessed, verse 18. And once again (4) the plaintive element predominates. This is not to be described as a gloomy Psalm, but the suppliant pleads for forgiveness, he does not enjoy it. Indeed, it is only towards the close that hope dawns, more through a consideration of what God is in Himself than the Psalmist's personal realization of His goodness.

Under all these circumstances the Davidic origin seems improbable. But we have not data enough to enable us to fix the date precisely, while the period of Jeremiah is in many respects very suitable. The words may be read as David's confession, or Jeremiah's prayer, or Israel's plea in her humiliation, or as a Psalm in the Anglican service for Ash Wednesday, or they may be appropriately used by any sufferer who would confess his sins and plead for mercy. The Psalmist, whoever he was, speaks for humanity, so long as it sins and suffers.

The Psalm readily divides itself into three parts: verses 1-8, a description of personal pain within; 9-14, the aggravation caused by alienation and persecution without; 15-22, prayers for help and deliverance.

For the title 'to bring to remembrance,' see Introd. p. 17. The view generally taken of this expression, as in R. V. marg., is that it indicates a liturgical use of the Psalm, 'to make memorial' (Heb. *azkara*) being a technical term for a particular portion of the meal-offering, or the offering of incense. See Lev. ii. 2 and xxiv. 7. The title in the LXX reads 'for a memorial concerning the sabbath-day.'

1. The distinction between the chastisement of anger and of love is brought out in Ps. vi. 1—see note there—and in Jer. x. 24. David, as well as later O. T. saints, quite understood and

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me,
And thy hand presseth me sore.
3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine indignation;
Neither is there any health in my bones because of my sin.
4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head:
As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
5 My wounds stink and are corrupt,
Because of my foolishness.
6 I am pained and bowed down greatly;

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recognized that suffering might be only a mark of fatherly regard, and he submitted to it as such, 2 Sam. xii, xxiv. 17. But the explicit distinction belongs rather to a later period.

2. Two conjugations of the same verb are employed for **stick fast** and **presseth sore.** It is difficult to render this in English, but we might say, 'Thine arrows have sunk down into me, and down upon me has sunk heavily thine hand.' The chief point is that it is God's arrows and God's hand that have caused the woe.

3, 4. Not only so, but the anger is deserved. The cause is sin, which the Psalmist bitterly feels and fully confesses. **Flesh** and **bones** represent the whole framework of the body; its afflictions bring home to him the heinousness of sin, which but for this kind of chastisement he might not have adequately felt. 'No health' means *lit.* 'no rest,' he tosses like a fever-stricken patient. In the fourth verse the sense of sin predominates, its copious floods have overwhelmed him, its terrible burden crushes him.

5-8. In each of these four verses words are used which hardly bear literal translation, but which vividly represent aspects of physical suffering. (1) The **wounds** are those which are caused by severe stripes, which fester and give forth a bad odour. (2) **I am bent and bowed down greatly** describes the cramped and cringing attitude of one who can hardly move for pain. (3) The central parts of the body are filled with **burning,** i.e. the fever of inflammation. (4) Hence he is **faint and sore bruised,** more *lit.* 'benumbed and sore broken,' the chill of approaching death is upon him.

The only additional elements in this painful description are that sin is recognized as foolishness, verse 5; that the Psalmist wears the outward garb and aspect of a mourner, 6; and that his pain

I go mourning all the day long.
For my loins are filled with burning; 7
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
I am faint and sore bruised: 8
I have roared by reason of the disquietness cf my heart.
Lord, all my desire is before thee; 9
And my groaning is not hid from thee.
My heart throbbeth, my strength faileth me: 10
As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.
My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my plague; 11
And my kinsmen stand afar off.
They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*; 12
And they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things,
And imagine deceits all the day long.
But I, as a deaf man, hear not; 13

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is not merely physical, but that he cries aloud because of 'the mourning,' R. V. **disquietness of my heart,** 8. The deepest trouble, after all, is within.

9. The God to whom the Psalmist cries understands the reality and depth of his need. Men for the most part do not. The chief comment which the foregoing descriptions arouse in the modern reader is that they are 'exaggerated,' 'oriental,' 'unreal.' If the pain was physical, less should have been said about it; if it be a description of grief for sin, the language is morbid and extreme. Such is the inevitable comment of the world; only God knows and understands the penitent's heart.

10. This verse represents the exhaustion of one who has passed through paroxysms of pain. The agony is not so keen, but it has left him spent, panting, half-blind and wholly helpless.

11, 12. In addition, like Job, he is deserted by his friends, or they fail to understand and sympathize, whilst enemies take advantage of his distress. R. V. by using in verse 11 the word **plague** suggests the idea of leprosy; friends are aware of his troubles, but shun him as one who is smitten of God, Isa. liii. 4. The phraseology suggests that they are not only aware of his pain, but add to it by remaining spectators of his sufferings, while they refuse to help. The saints treat him thus, while the sinners plan to drag him further into sin and misery.

13, 14. The Psalmist's silence shows that his attitude is dif-

And I am as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.
14 Yea, I am as a man that heareth not,
And in whose mouth are no reproofs.
15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope:
Thou wilt answer, O Lord my God.
16 For I said, Lest they rejoice over me:
When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.
17 For I am ready to halt,
And my sorrow is continually before me.
18 For I will declare mine iniquity;
I will be sorry for my sin.

---

ferent from that of Job. He is one 'in whose mouth are no arguments,' because he cannot, like Job, plead his own unsullied integrity. A. V. is mistaken in rendering the tenses as past, it is at the present moment that he is deaf and dumb before men. The trouble is not chiefly of their causing, and it is not removable by their remedies. The Psalmist leaves them to taunt or to slander, it is to God he wishes to speak, God's voice he wishes to hear.

15. The attitude of expectation is towards God, who alone possesses both knowledge of the disease and power to heal it. In the second clause 'Thou' is emphatic—'It is thou who wilt answer, O Lord my God.' Notice the three Divine names combined in this verse. *Jehovah* is used in verse 1, *Adonai* in verse 9; both these, together with *Elohim*, are found here and again in verses 21, 22.

16. Various pleas are here introduced. **For I said** introduces them, as having formed the basis of the previous prayer. One is, **Lest they rejoice**, i. e. those who are enemies alike of God and His servant. For, in spite of God's just anger against him, the Psalmist claims to belong to the side of righteousness on the earth; he is its representative, though unworthy, and fears lest he should bring discredit on its cause.

17. The next plea is his own sore need. He is limping and ready to fall, see Ps. xxxv. 15. This may be understood of extreme physical weakness, or a sense of moral feebleness may be combined with it. This seems to be suggested by verse 16.

18. Another plea, the most potent of all. The contrite heart forms the best and truest sacrifice; the Psalmist brings as his offering secret penitence and open confession—all the reparation that man can make. The word translated **I will be sorry**—LXX

But mine enemies are lively, *and* are strong: 19
And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.
They also that render evil for good 20
Are adversaries unto me, because I follow the thing that is good.
Forsake me not, O LORD: 21
O my God, be not far from me.
Make haste to help me, 22
O Lord my salvation.

For the Chief Musician, for Jeduthun. A Psalm of David. 39
I said, I will take heed to my ways, 1

---

and Jerome, 'I will be anxious'—anticipates the later idea of 'anxiety' about the soul.

19. mine enemies are lively, and **are strong:** the emendation of the text suggested, 'They that without cause are mine enemies,' would complete the parallelism, but is uncalled for.

20. The attitude of the Psalmist towards men is different from his relation to God. Before men he is righteous, relatively if not absolutely so. He claims to be a follower of the good, to have returned good for evil to his enemies, and he fearlessly identifies himself with the cause of righteousness. He may, and does, feel himself compelled to be humble in the dust before God, but his neighbours and his enemies have no cause to complain of him.

21, 22. The last stanza is the brightest, though as yet only the dawn of returning day appears to earnest and believing prayer. The source of comfort is found in the recognition of what God is and will prove Himself to be. He is *Jehovah*, *Adonai*, *Elohim*; the Psalmist can say he is **my God** and **my salvation.** Whilst he has this storehouse to draw upon he cannot despair, though he has not yet, as in some previous instances, heard the word of pardon and deliverance.

PSALM XXXIX. MAN'S FRAILTY AND TRUE HOPE.

The pathetic beauty of this Psalm has been generally recognized; if its music is in a minor key it is subduing rather than depressing, for trust and hope are breathed from amidst its plaintive chords. It has been assigned to the author of the preceding Psalm, but, whilst points of comparison present themselves, the differences are still more marked. It represents a later stage of thought and feeling—either in personal experience or national history.

It is clear from the opening words that sorrow and mental

That I sin not with my tongue:

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perplexity were not new to the Psalmist. He has passed through many stages of trial. His own personal sufferings, the prosperity of the wicked, the seeming purposelessness of human life, are themes which have often stirred his soul to the depths. Time and again he has been moved to rebel and loudly to complain, if not to blaspheme. Thus far, however, he has kept silence, till in the Psalm his unrest finds utterance. Not, however, in the tumultuous words in which long repressed feeling generally issues; the tone is calm though earnest in its pleading; the Psalmist has already learned some of the lessons of sorrow. Utterance has brought some relief, 'like dull narcotics, numbing pain.' But the Psalm closes in a kind of twilight; before the morning of joy has actually dawned the Psalmist sees a glimmer of hope, and he ends with a touching prayer that this may deepen and grow into fruition.

The opening stanza, verses 1-3, is introductory, describing the occasion of the Psalm; in 4, 5 the writer prays, pleading his own frailty; in 6-11 he enlarges upon the transitoriness of human life generally and his personal trouble; while in the closing stanza, 12, 13, he renews his prayer as a mortal child of man, staying his weakness upon the eternal God.

'Jeduthun,' whose name is found in the title—see also Pss. lxii and lxxvii—is described in 2 Chron. xxxv. 16 as a contemporary of David and 'the king's seer.' In 1 Chron. xvi. 41 Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun are named as three leaders of temple-choirs or musical guilds. Elsewhere, as in 1 Chron. xv. 17, the name Ethan is mentioned as a third with Heman and Asaph. In the present instance Jeduthun would appear to be the name of the 'precentor,' but the preposition used in Pss. lxii and lxxvii is a different one, 'after the manner of Jeduthun,' and some have questioned whether the word is a proper name at all. The personal name was, however, in all probability traditional, though the subsequent use of it in connexion with music varied.

1. The silence here described is not the same as that described in xxxviii. 13, though it is natural to compare the two cases. In the former a conscious sinner, assailed by insults, forbears to reply; here a saint, sorely exercised by the problems of life, restrains his murmurings and complaints in the presence of the ungodly, lest his words should do harm. So Job in his earlier trials 'sinned not with his lips,' did not 'charge God with foolishness,' but in silence 'received evil' at the hands of the Lord (Job i. 22, ii. 10). The third line reads *lit.* 'I will put a muzzle on my mouth': compare Mic. vii. 5, 'Keep the doors of thy mouth.' The complaints which the Psalmist restrains Jeremiah did not hesitate to utter, complaining that God had deceived him (xv. 18

I will keep my mouth with a bridle,
While the wicked is before me.
I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from 2
good;
And my sorrow was stirred.
My heart was hot within me; 3
While I was musing the fire kindled:
Then spake I with my tongue:
LORD, make me to know mine end, 4
And the measure of my days, what it is;
Let me know how frail I am.

---

and xx. 7), words which well might sound blasphemous to outsiders. Some expositors think that the clause **While the wicked is before me** indicate the source of the Psalmist's temptation—while they flaunt themselves in their prosperity before my eyes; but this interpretation seems less likely than the one given above.

2, 3. even from good: R. V. marg. 'and had no comfort.' Either of these translations makes good sense. The former is supported by Gen. xxxi. 24, 'Speak not, either good or bad'; the latter is in accordance with the idiomatic use of the preposition, 'far from good,' and is more in harmony with the context—'I kept silence joylessly' (Maclaren), or, without allowing myself the relief of expression. Three stages are mentioned which led up to utterance. (1) **My sorrow was stirred,** unrest such as friction without outlet causes; (2) **My heart grew hot** with indignation and passion; (3) **the fire kindled**—it blazed up in flame, and therefore now could not be repressed. The next clause is more expressive without the explanatory 'Then,' which is not found in the Hebrew.

4. It must be granted that this resigned and touching prayer is not what might have been expected from the introductory words. Here is no Job-like outburst of one who would fill his mouth with arguments when admitted to plead his cause in Jehovah's presence. Either the words of hot impatience are not recorded, or the Psalmist in his period of still submission had learned his lesson and hushed and quieted his soul (cxxxi. 2) before he began to speak.

He asks that he may be taught his own frailty and transiency, as the best way of facing the problems of life. The clue to the labyrinth is here; things are not what they seem; and the creature of a day, who belongs to a crowd of fleeting shadows, will not venture to argue with the Almighty.

5 Behold, thou hast made my days *as* handbreadths;
And mine age is as nothing before thee:
Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.
[Selah
6 Surely every man walketh in a vain shew:
Surely they are disquieted in vain:
He heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather
them.
7 And now, Lord, what wait I for?

---

5. as **handbreadths,** each one less than half a span, a seventh part of a cubit—a few such brief spaces make up the whole of life. Render, 'And my life-time is as nothing before thee'; the word **age** does not convey the idea, which might be cumbrously paraphrased, 'the duration of my transitory existence.'

Three times in as many lines is repeated the conjunction translated in A.V. and R.V. **Surely.** This is perhaps the best rendering, if it be borne in mind that the word always contains the idea of 'nothing but'—as if many alternatives had been considered, and the reasoner is shut up to one only at the last. Hence here and in Ps. lxii, where also the word is characteristically repeated, many interpreters translate 'Only.' A literal rendering would be—'Only altogether-a-breath is every man even when standing firm.'

6. Better, 'Surely as a shadow doth man walk to and fro:
Surely for vanity are they disquieted.'

Breath—shadow—phantom—dream—such are the words used by the poets of all ages to set forth the brief, unsubstantial life of man—'swift as a shadow, short as any dream.' The Psalmist introduces at the same time an artistic touch and a moral lesson when he contrasts the confused and boisterous din of man's strivings with the vanity, the nothingness in which they end. And yet another, when he says with graphic suggestiveness, 'He pileth up hoards, and knoweth not who shall carry them off.' These words are not uttered complainingly. They represent a view of life which the Psalmist desires to reach, one which will furnish an antidote to the murmurings he was disposed to utter when he saw the prosperity of evil-doers. One who foresaw the end of Christ's parable of the Rich Fool would not envy him his great barns and greater stores of goods.

7. And now always marks a turning-point in argument or exhortation. Here the words open up that secret source of consolation which has enabled the Psalmist to dwell pensively

My hope is in thee.
Deliver me from all my transgressions : 8
Make me not the reproach of the foolish.
I was dumb, I opened not my mouth ; 9
Because thou didst it.
Remove thy stroke away from me : 10
I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.
When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, 11
Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth :
Surely every man is vanity. [Selah
Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry ; 12
Hold not thy peace at my tears :
For I am a stranger with thee,
A sojourner, as all my fathers were.

---

but not sadly upon the transiency of earthly things. **What wait I for?** asks a natural question, for a man who took such a view of life as is implied in verses 5 and 6 might seem to have no aim or object in life. The answer to the question, 'What do I look for?' is not future blessedness, but a present God.

8, 9. The Psalmist desires a manifestation of God to himself; while he acknowledges that his suffering has not been undeserved, he claims that as a true servant of God he should be vindicated in the eyes of the foolish, i. e. the careless and godless evil-doers around.

10, 11. The humility of these pleas shows that chastening has done its work. Affliction is recognized as coming from God ; rebellion is out of place and useless on the part of sinful man ; the Psalmist only pleads, God be merciful !

Render the second line of verse 11 as R. V. marg., 'Thou consumest like a moth his delights' or 'his desirable things.' The word is usually found in the plural, and is here used collectively. The silent but effectual destruction effected by a moth upon a garment (see Isa. l. 9) forms the point of comparison. The transient element in life for the moment hides the permanent—'Nought but a breath is every man !'

12. A final plea. One who is thus a transient guest may throw himself upon the clemency of the lord of the country—a claim universally allowed in the East. Of the four words for stranger in Hebrew, somewhat inconsistently translated in our versions, two describe a man who is literally a 'foreigner' and has no rights

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength,
Before I go hence, and be no more.

40 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 I waited patiently for the LORD;

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in a land to which in no sense he belongs. The other two are used here, the more important of them, *gêr*, being the name of the 'stranger' so often recognized in Jewish legislation. He is a man dwelling permanently in a land which is not his by right of birth, but who as a resident possesses certain rights and performs corresponding services. See Lev. xix. 23. Another passage teaches Israelites that the land of promise which they call theirs is really God's: 'ye are strangers and sojourners with me,' Lev. xxv. 23. The idea is applied in the N. T.: see 1 Pet. ii. 11; Heb. xi. 13.

13. The first line runs *lit.*, 'O look away from me, that I may brighten up.' The usual prayer of the Psalmists is that God would look towards them and brighten them with the light of His countenance. But a parallel to the expression of this verse is found in Job vii. 19, 'How long wilt thou not look away from me?' The Watcher of men sees so much that is amiss, that He cannot look at the life of foolish, sinful man without frowning. Such a frown strikes terror, and it is the wrath of the All-searching One that the Psalmist fears. He prays therefore that the keen glance of those piercing eyes may be averted, and that God's mercy may cheer him for a moment before he passes away into a land which in comparison with the present life is so shadowy and dark that its inhabitants may even be represented as 'being no more.'

PSALM XL. THANKFUL SELF-CONSECRATION.

Something may be learned from the study of this Psalm by those who would understand the methods of the compilers of the Psalter. The latter portion of it, verses 13-17, occurs again as a separate Psalm—lxx. in the second Book—with the change of the name *Yahweh* into *Elohim* and some other modifications. It is clear, therefore, either that two Psalms originally distinct have been combined, or that a portion of one has been detached for separate use; and that editors were in the habit of modifying the text, either for liturgical or other reasons. The conjectures of modern critics are accordingly justified when they suggest similar explanations in the case of other apparently composite Psalms.

The whole history of this case, however, is not clear. The majority of critics hold that two originally independent Psalms have been combined; some are quite as sure that the Psalm as

And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the 2
miry clay;
And he set my feet upon a rock, and established my
goings.

---

it stands was composed as one whole. It is true that two portions are discernible, very different in character, but the second of these does not exactly coincide with Ps. lxx, nor is it easy to fashion a complete and well-rounded Psalm from the former part of the present one. So far as internal evidence goes, verses 1–10 are vigorous in expression and joyful in tone, while verses 11–17 are plaintive and supplicatory, and in style somewhat tame, presenting little more than an echo of other Psalms.

It is not easy to speak with confidence, but internal evidence seems to point to verses 1–10 as an original Psalm, expressing in striking language a sense of God's goodness in delivering the writer from trouble and danger, and his determination to yield himself fully to the service of his Deliverer. An appendix was added later (verses 12–17), in which the jubilant confidence of the earlier verses passes into a sadder and less hopeful strain, and a portion of this was used as a short litany and placed in a later Elohistic collection as Ps. lxx. The first word of verse 14, 'Be pleased,' was omitted, perhaps to make a better opening. The alternative to this hypothesis is to suppose that Ps. xl from the first formed one whole, but the transition from triumph to depression is very marked, and it seems hardly possible that the same writer in the same experiences could pen verses 1–3 and verses 12, 13, 17.

There is no intrinsic reason for ascribing this Psalm to David, and several may be urged against it; but the alleged points of historical connexion with Jeremiah or the return from exile are hardly more convincing than the arguments of those who would accept the title literally. The spiritual significance of the words is not affected by the uncertainty as to author and occasion.

1. Render, 'For Jehovah I waited, waited'; only thus can the emphasis of the Hebrew idiom be reproduced in English.

2. Two figures may be combined here, that of a dungeon in which a man is imprisoned, and a swamp in which he is likely to be swallowed up. Or both may be combined, as in the case of Jeremiah, who was let down into the dungeon where 'was no water, but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire' (xxxviii. 6). Read, with R. V. marg., 'a pit of destruction.' The metaphor probably indicates trouble rather than sin; which might, however, be included if verse 12 formed part of the original composition.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:
Many shall see it, and fear,
And shall trust in the LORD.
4 Blessed is the man that maketh the LORD his trust,
And respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
5 Many, O LORD my God, are the wonderful works which thou hast done,
And thy thoughts which are to us-ward:
They cannot be set in order unto thee;
If I would declare and speak of them,
They are more than can be numbered.
6 Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in;

---

3. The **new song,** mentioned also in xxxiii. 3, xcvi. 1, Isa. xl. 12, as well as in the Apocalypse, describes the fresh outburst of praise which fresh mercies and signal interventions demand. For the phrase **see it, and fear,** compare Isa. lx. 5. Terror is of course not meant, but reverent confidence in God.

4. The Psalmist passes from personal deliverance to more general considerations. He appears to have lived in a time when there was danger of apostasy from Jehovah worship: hence his denunciation of the 'arrogant' and 'those who fall away treacherously.' The word translated 'respecteth' means *lit.* 'turneth away,' and increases the probability that idolatry was rife and failure in allegiance to the true God only too common.

5. This exclamation is probably caused by the recent manifestation of God's goodness which prompted the praise of verse 3, but with a national rather than a personal reference. 'Marvellous works' is a kind of standing phrase for striking deliverances such as God wrought out for Israel at special junctures, not necessarily implying what we call 'miracles.' Compare Exod. xv. 11; Ps. lxxviii. 4, &c.

The third line may be translated either, 'There is none that can be compared unto thee' (R. V. marg.), or 'There is no setting forth of them unto thee.' But the latter meaning is more in harmony with the context, and preserves the parallelism. In the former case the clause forms a somewhat awkward parenthesis.

6. Between the last verse and this stands the unuttered question, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?' The

Mine ears hast thou opened:
Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
Then said I, Lo, I am come; 7
In the roll of the book it is written of me:

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answer is of that spiritual kind which shows how fully the devout Jew sometimes understood the evangelical spirit. Four kinds of sacrifice are mentioned here: *zebach*, **sacrifice,** and *minchah*, **offering,** are the general terms for the bleeding and unbloody sacrifice respectively; while the *'olah* or **burnt offering** represents the entire consecration of the worshipper, and the **sin offering** the propitiation necessary before an offender could be re-admitted to the Divine presence and favour. None of these in and of themselves are well-pleasing to God; the Psalmist, like the prophet in Isa. i. 11 and elsewhere, understood that these were but symbolic of heart-service such as God delights in.

The clause interpolated between these two parallel statements is somewhat obscure. Literally it runs, see marg., 'Ears hast thou digged,' or 'pierced for me.' The difficulty lies in the metaphor, for the meaning seems clear—Thou hast given me ears to hear thy voice, and desirest to find a heart ready to obey it. Whether the 'digging' means the original planting of the ear, or the uncovering of it and making the passage clearer—'boring' as mentioned in Exod. xxi. 6, a mark of perpetual servitude, cannot be intended—the conclusion is much the same. The LXX has a curious reading, 'A body hast thou prepared me.' This may have arisen from a confusion of words on the part of a scribe, or it may represent an intentional paraphrase on the part of the translator. The quotation in Heb. x. 6 in the main follows the LXX version.

7. The readiness of the Psalmist to obey the call of God is here expressed. The willing servant says, 'Here am I.' Again all is clear with the exception of a parenthetical clause which corresponds in position with that just discussed, and which should probably be translated, 'In the roll of the book it is prescribed to me.' The break in the construction found in the second line of each of these verses, whilst at first disconcerting, when examined, is seen to heighten the effect. The Psalmist expresses his eagerness to engage in a service he has learned to love; but he interpolates a reference to God's command in this verse, as in verse 7 he interpolated a statement of God's claim. The reference to the law and the roll of the book appears to be to Deuteronomy, in which the spiritual claims of the law are specially enforced.

The quotation in Hebrews and the application of these words to Christ, follows the general spirit and tenor of the passage exactly, though questions may arise as to the phraseology in detail.

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God;
Yea, thy law is within my heart.
9 I have published righteousness in the great congregation;
Lo, I will not refrain my lips,
O LORD, thou knowest.
10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation:
I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth
from the great congregation.
11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD:
Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve
me.
12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about,

---

9. Render, 'I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness—my lips I did not restrain.' Law and 'gospel' are not opposed in the Psalmist's mind: no proclamation can be more welcome than that there is a God of righteousness in the earth. The variation of tense in the second clause does not imply a transition from the past to the future; all five clauses in verses 9 and 10 describe what the Psalmist has done or refrained from doing.

10. Various attributes of God, sometimes falsely placed in opposition to one another, are here mentioned in the same connexion and the same breath. **Faithfulness** secures **salvation**; **lovingkindness** is supported by **truth.**

11. The temptation may have arisen in a comparatively corrupt society not to testify thus openly: the Psalmist has not yielded to it, and therefore with confidence he appeals to God that as he has not restrained loyal witness and utterance, 'Thou, O Jehovah, wilt not restrain thy tender mercies from me.' The tense implies 'Thou wilt not, wilt Thou? I am persuaded that thy lovingkindness and truth which I have declared to others will be vouchsafed to guard me.'

12. Whether the last verse be translated as prayer or as confident assurance, there is a hint in it that the Psalmist needs help. Of this the later author—if such there were—avails himself to describe a condition of things not previously suggested. Those who maintain the unity of the Psalm are compelled to admit that no account is given of the sudden storm-clouds which are here found changing the whole aspect of the landscape. **Evils** are troubles, but they are due to **iniquities**; and when these words

Mine iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able
to look up;
They are more than the hairs of mine head, and my heart
hath failed me.
Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: 13
Make haste to help me, O LORD.
Let them be ashamed and confounded together 14
That seek after my soul to destroy it:
Let them be turned backward and brought to dishonour
That delight in my hurt.
Let them be desolate by reason of their shame 15
That say unto me, Aha, Aha.
Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in 16
thee:
Let such as love thy salvation say continually,
The LORD be magnified.
But I am poor and needy; 17
Yet the Lord thinketh upon me:
Thou art my help and my deliverer;
Make no tarrying, O my God.

---

are written, both are felt to be overwhelming. The man who had proclaimed God's deliverances so that many should see and fear is himself not able to look up; he who had just sung a new song and expressed himself as ready for any service is so depressed that he says, 'my heart hath forsaken me.'

13-16. Almost all these prayers are found word for word in other Psalms. For verse 13^a see Ps. xxxviii. 22, verse 13^b see Ps. xxii. 19. Verse 14 is made up of phrases found either in verses 4 or 26 of Ps. xxxv, whilst every clause in verses 15 and 16 can be gathered from some part of the same Psalm. This plagiarism marks a second-rate writer, and is very unlike the vigorous originality of the earlier portion.

17. The close of the Psalm is touching in its contrast with the opening. Some disconsolate one speaks for himself, conscious that he has the same ground of hope as the man who was taken from the pit of destruction, and pleading that the like deliverance may be his.

41 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 Blessed is he that considereth the poor:
The Lord will deliver him in the day of evil.

'But I—afflicted and needy—the Lord thinketh of me:
My help and deliverer art thou; O my God, tarry not.'

Such a suppliant, waiting for Jehovah and crying unto Him, will not be long before he too finds his feet set upon a rock, his goings established, and his mouth filled with a new and joyful song.

Psalm XLI. A Sufferer's Consolation.

It is not unnatural to think of this Psalm as David's, and in reading verse 9 to think of the treachery of Ahithophel, see 2 Sam. xvi and xvii. This is the older view, accepted by Delitzsch and others; Ewald says, 'manifestly written by a prince.' But the sickness which forms a somewhat prominent feature in the Psalm is not alluded to in the history, nor does the way in which 'enemies' come to visit the sufferer correspond with David's circumstances at the time of the rebellion of Absalom. Baethgen assigns the Psalm to the post-Exilic period, and Cheyne interprets it of 'the people of Israel likened to a man who is dangerously sick.'

As we read the Psalm, it is written by a man hardly recovering from a dangerous illness, the personal and bodily affliction being the main element in his trouble. This is aggravated, however, by the base ingratitude of false friends, who regard the illness as a judgement from God and cruelly anticipate a fatal issue. There is not sufficient evidence to warrant us in assigning the authorship to David, and any parallel which may be found in the condition of the nation to the sufferer in the Psalm is altogether secondary and derived. It may, however, be read of David, as Kirkpatrick suggests, if he is viewed as 'unnerved by sickness, in which he recognized a just punishment for his sins,' and as lying prostrate and helpless before Absalom's rebellion actually broke out.

The first stanza, verses 1–3, contains a general meditation, which in verses 4–9 the Psalmist applies to himself; verses 10–12 contain a closing prayer.

1. A beatitude, the O. T. counterpart to 'Blessed are the merciful.' The word **poor** hardly conveys the idea of the original, which means feeble, slender, limp, as of a limb that cannot hold itself up; if 'weak' be accepted, as in R. V. marg., it must be understood of any who need help 'in mind, body, or estate,' but with perhaps a special reference to bodily sickness. The A. V. 'in time of trouble' gives the thought of the Psalmist better in English than R. V. **in the day of evil,** though the latter is the

The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he 2
shall be blessed upon the earth;
And deliver not thou him unto the will of his enemies.
The Lord will support him upon the couch of languishing: 3
Thou makest all his bed in his sickness.
I said, O Lord, have mercy upon me: 4
Heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.
Mine enemies speak evil against me, *saying*, 5
When shall he die, and his name perish?
And if he come to see *me*, he speaketh vanity; 6
His heart gathereth iniquity to itself:
When he goeth abroad, he telleth it.

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more literal rendering. 'Evil' in English has a predominantly ethical meaning.

2. Jehovah will preserve him. The future tense adopted in R. V. is much better than the optative (marg.). The Psalmist is thinking of himself and his own attempts to help the needy, and comforting himself with the thought that God will not forget him in sickness, but preserve him from death and grant him prosperity again. The last clause may be a prayer, as the Revisers render it, but it is better to keep the future throughout.

3. The second clause runs *lit.*, 'All his lying down thou changest in his sickness.' The meaning is well given by Cheyne's paraphrase, 'As oft as he lies low, thou recoverest him in his sickness.' The idea of arranging the bed for the sufferer's comfort cannot be drawn from the root meaning to 'turn,' not to say that it is in itself a Western and modern one.

4. Render, 'As for me, I have said, Be gracious unto me.' The words that follow do not belong simply to the past, they represent the sufferer's present attitude before God. He is content to accept his sickness as a mark of God's displeasure against his sins, though he resents the malicious interpretation of his enemies. A saint may say, 'I am the chief of sinners,' when it is not true for his enemies to say it of him.

5, 6. Malice and falsehood are near akin. Those who were gloating over the sufferer's evil case, and gleefully anticipating his death and the disappearance of his memory, pay visits of pretended sympathy, and speak 'falsehood' (R. V. marg.). Very striking is the picture of the hypocrite whilst in the sick man's presence gathering malice in his heart and material upon which it

7 All that hate me whisper together against me:
Against me do they devise my hurt.
8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him:
And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.
9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which
did eat of my bread,
Hath lifted up his heel against me.
10 But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon me, and raise me up,
That I may requite them.
11 By this I know that thou delightest in me,
Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

---

may feed, and then, when he joins his associates outside, relieving his mean and spiteful soul.

7, 8. This sickness is a matter of importance to many. They are accustomed to meet like an opposition faction at a court, whispering calumnies and hoping the worst. The first clause of verse 8 runs *lit.*, 'A thing of Belial is poured out upon him.' But the translation of R. V. could hardly be improved upon, for the evil is physical, and the notion of its having 'fastened upon' the sufferer like welded metal (Job xxviii. 2) is implied by the Hebrew root used.

9. This treacherous cruelty finds its climax in one person, **mine own familiar friend,** *lit.* 'the man of my peace'; one who was bound to me by outward ties of hospitality and kindness, as well as by an inward bond of trustful friendship, has taken this opportunity of doing me all the mischief in his power. The clause **Hath lifted up** (*lit.* 'made great') **his heel against me** may refer to violence, i. e. has struck me with all his force; or to fraud, he has raised his heel covertly to trip me up and overthrow me; the latter is the more appropriate to the context.

The 'fulfilling' of this scripture spoken of in John xiii. 18 in relation to Christ and Judas does not necessarily imply conscious prediction on the part of the Psalmist, but a most appropriate application of the words is made on the part of the evangelist.

10, 11. A prayer that God would in his case illustrate those general principles of which the Psalmist spoke in verses 1–3. The idea of personal retaliation, **that I may requite them,** appears here again; and though it may be said that these malicious traitors are enemies of God and of righteousness, the note of persona triumph anticipated cannot be altogether shut out, but with th

And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, 12
And settest me before thy face for ever.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, 13
From everlasting and to everlasting.
Amen, and Amen.

---

addition named in verse 11 that the Psalmist wished for his own triumph mainly as a proof that God was well pleased with him.

12. The present tenses represent the assurance of faith. The Psalmist is confident that his enemies' malicious hopes will be disappointed, because, sinful as he is, he is a man of integrity. God will raise him from his sickness, vindicate his character, prolong his life, and grant him a posterity who shall perpetuate his name 'for ever' in the sight and in the favour of God.

13. This verse is not a part of the Psalm, but a 'subscription' appended by the editor to mark the close of the first Book of Psalms. See also Pss. lxxii. 18, lxxxix. 52, and cvi. 48. Such doxologies were usual not only at the beginning of prayer, 1 Kings viii. 15 and 1 Chron. xxix. 10, but as ejaculations in conversation and upon all solemn occasions, 1 Kings i. 48. The use at the end of various collections of Psalms is liturgical.

The present doxology is simple but sublime :—

> 'Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel :
> From eternity and to eternity. Amen, and Amen.'

The word **Amen** is used adverbially, and means 'firmly' or 'truly' ; it may be uttered by a suppliant at the end of his own prayers, but more usually in the O. T. it represents the response of another, as when Jeremiah responds to the words of God (xi. 5), or to those of Hananiah (xxviii. 6). It also expresses, as in 1 Chron. xvi. 36, the response of the people in public prayer, and that is no doubt the meaning here.

BOOK II.

PSALMS 42—72.

It has already been said, see Introd. p. 6, that the division of the Psalms into Books does not precisely correspond with the history and growth of the various collections. The first Book does, however, in all probability correspond to a first general collection. As we have seen, all the Psalms in it are ascribed 'to David,' with a very few exceptions which do not invalidate the rule. The second general division, however, does not coincide with the second Book. It appears to have been formed by the union of several smaller collections or groups, occurring partly in the second and partly in the third Book, including altogether Pss. xlii to lxxxix. The greater portion of this division (Pss. xlii–lxxxiii) is 'Elohistic,' i.e. the name *Elohim*, 'God,' is used throughout it, instead of *Yahweh*, which prevails in the first Book. The exact figures are: in Book I 'Yahweh' occurs 272 times, 'Elohim' 15, while in Book II 'Elohim' is found 164 times, 'Yahweh' only 30 times.

The Book on which we now enter consists of the following elements: eight Psalms (xlii–xlix) 'of the sons of Korah,' one (l) 'of Asaph,' a group of eighteen Psalms (li to lxx, except lxvi, lxvii) 'of David,' an anonymous Psalm (lxxxi), and one 'of Solomon' (lxxii).

As this is the first appearance of 'Korahite' Psalms, and the greater portion of such Psalms are found at the opening of the second Book, it will be convenient here to explain the meaning of the term. Korah, who was descended from Levi, is described in Num. xvi as instigating a rebellion against Moses and perishing in the attempt. His descendants are frequently mentioned as taking part in the service of the temple. In 2 Chron. xx. 19 they are spoken of as singers, though in 1 Chron. ix. 19 and xxvi. 1 they appear as door-keepers. Heman, the leader of one of the three great temple choirs, is represented as a Korahite, see 1 Chron. vi. 33 and xxv. 6. It would appear that at the time of the second temple a guild of singers was known by this name, tracing their descent from Levi through Kohath and Korah, and the groups of Pss. xlii–xlix and lxxxiv, lxxxv, lxxxvii are ascribed in some sense 'to' this guild or company.

The question is, in what sense: and two chief answers are returned. The A. V. rendering **for** seems to imply that the part of the Korahites was to set these Psalms to music, as in the phrase 'For the precentor.' It is, however, now generally accepted that the preposition should be rendered as in R. V. of, corresponding to the title 'of David,' and indicating not personal authorship, but the name of a collection—the hymn-book, if we may so say, of the Korahite choir. There is a certain family likeness in these Psalms, partly of subject, partly of style. Many of them exhibit strong attachment to the temple and its service, whilst there is a strain of freshness, not easy to describe, which distinguishes their language from the smooth and conventional phraseology of the latest liturgical Psalms.

PSALMS XLII AND XLIII. THE SIGH OF AN EXILE.

The two Psalms numbered xlii and xliii in the Psalter are evidently closely connected. They are concerned with the same theme, breathe the same spirit, are couched in the same style, and are marked by the recurrence of the same refrain. All the Psalms in Book II except xliii are furnished with titles, and this points to the fact that in the earliest collection it formed one with Ps. xlii, as it now does in a large number of Hebrew MSS. The majority, however, present the Psalms separately, as do all the ancient versions. Hence the division must have taken place early, and it is possible that xliii is a supplement from the hand of the same or a later poet attached to the original composition. The probability is, however, that the whole sixteen verses were originally one composition, divided later into two for liturgical purposes, just as in other cases Psalms originally distinct have been combined for similar reasons.

When the devout Levite lived who here describes his love for the sanctuary, and under what circumstances he sang of his sorrow on account of banishment from it, we can only conjecture. Dates have been assigned to the Psalm varying from the time of David during Absalom's rebellion, say 1023 B.C. (Delitzsch), to the time of Antiochus the Great, B.C. 198 (Cheyne). It is not likely that it was written so early as the former date, nor so late as the latter. The temple is standing, its services are being carried on, and the Psalmist who has been wont to join in these is now prevented from worshipping with the great congregation. It does not follow that he was literally an exile, and he appears to be detained in North Palestine. He is surrounded by heathen enemies who taunt him with his allegiance to Jehovah : he hopes, however, to be delivered from them and to join again in the worship that he loves. The choice of dates seems to lie between the period of the later Monarchy and that shortly after the Exile, and the balance of probability seems to be in favour of the former, perhaps at the time of one of the Assyrian invasions.

The poem is skilfully constructed, whether the word 'Maschil' indicates this or not. It is obviously divided into three parts by the recurrence of the refrain 'Why art thou cast down, O my

42 For the Chief Musician; Maschil of the sons of Korah.

1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?
3 My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
4 These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,

---

soul?' In each stanza there is longing and hope, but the plaintive strain is somewhat less dominant in the first, xlii. 1-5, than in the second, 6-11, while in the third, Ps. xliii, hopefulness decidedly prevails.

1. Render, 'As a hind which panteth.' The noun is common gender, but the verb is feminine, as is the word for 'soul' in Hebrew and in most languages when metaphor is employed. The word translated **panteth** occurs only here and in Joel i. 20. Some interpreters, ancient and modern, understand it to mean the peculiar cry of the stag, but it is tolerably clear that it indicates the intense longing of the animal for water in a period of drought.

2. Some have found a reference in the phrase **the living God** to the living, or running, streams which are so greatly to be preferred to stagnant pools. This is unlikely; we are rather to understand that the *animula vagula blandula*, the timid, eager, fluttering soul of man, cannot be satisfied with any abstraction to worship and to trust in, but longs for a God who knows and feels and loves and cares—One who is strongly contrasted with the 'dumb idols' of the heathen.

The phrase **appear before God** is the usual formula for the annual visits to the temple mentioned in Exod. xxiii. 17; compare 'every one of them appeareth before God in Zion,' Ps. lxxxiv. 7. The expression is to be understood literally here; the spiritual blessing is closely associated with the earthly sanctuary.

3. It does not appear who are the foes who taunt him in his sorrow. Verse 10 and xlii. 1, 2 make it most probable that the 'ungodly' and the 'adversaries' are not Jews, and it would appear as if the Psalmist were alone amongst men who neither acknowledged Jehovah nor sympathized with him in trouble. At the same time the Book of Job and many Psalms show, and all experience confirms the truth, that co-religionists may be most cruel of all in pressing home the taunt of this verse—God hath forgotten thee.

4. Memories crowd in upon him, but here the 'remembering

How I went with the throng, and led them to the house
of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping
holyday.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul? 5
And *why* art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him
For the health of his countenance.

---

happier things' is not 'sorrow's crown of sorrow,' but affords the truest relief. Render, 'These things would I remember, as I pour out my soul within me,' viz. 'how I used to pass with the festal throng, how I used to lead them in procession to the house of God,' &c. If the Psalmist can find no sympathy around him, he will recall the times when he was permitted to enjoy the nearer presence of God in the company of multitudes like-minded with himself. **Within me,** *lit.* 'upon me.' Compare Ps. cxxxi. 2, where the Psalmist hushes and quiets his soul like a fractious child. Here he lets it have full course to weep out its sorrows, recalling brighter days.

5. But only for a moment. In this verse, repeated as a refrain and forming the ruling strain of the Psalm, the believer takes his soul to task for indulging a natural but more or less distrustful grief, and he recalls himself to the abiding Source of comfort and hope.

'Why dost thou bow thyself down,' i. e. in mourning (compare Isa. lviii. 5, 'to bow down the head like a rush') 'and moan within me?' *lit.* 'upon me,' as in the last verse. It was the object of the Psalmist's enemies to induce him to give up confidence in a God who would not, or did not, help him. He discerns that his one ground of safety is to cling in faith to One whose very presence brings deliverance. R. V. marg. 'help' is nearer to the Hebrew than the translation 'health' in the text.

According to the received Hebrew text, the last line should be translated 'for the help of his countenance'; or, more correctly, 'his countenance is salvation.' R. V. marg., however, shows that an alternative reading is followed by the versions, according to which the refrain here is found in the same form as in verse 11 and xliii. 5, 'Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.' It is advisable to follow this reading, since the construction by which the rendering of R. V. text is obtained from the Massoretic text is an awkward one. The chief objection is that this removes the words **O my God** from the opening of verse 6, but the confusion

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan,
And the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.
7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts:
All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
8 *Yet* the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the day-time,
And in the night his song shall be with me,
Even a prayer unto the God of my life.

---

has probably arisen from the occurrence of the word *Elohai* twice, once at the end of verse 5 and again at the beginning of verse 6.

6. In spite of the rallying cry of the last verse, the Psalmist's soul is still bowed down, and has not yet recovered sufficient strength to raise herself. In this strophe the dejection is even deeper than before. The region described here, to which for the time the Psalmist is confined, is in the far north-east of Palestine, near the Caesarea Philippi of later days. The peaks of Hermon are described in the plural, as they would dominate the scene on which he was accustomed to gaze, and **the hill Mizar** ('little') would probably indicate a lower peak in the neighbourhood. The alteration in the reading proposed by Wellhausen, which would find in 'the little mountain' a reference to Zion, is far-fetched and unnecessary.

7. For **at the noise of thy waterspouts** read 'In the voice of thy cataracts.' The scenery suggests this striking figure. The rocks of the neighbourhood, in the spring season when the snows of Hermon melt, are covered with foaming cascades, and the impetuous Jordan would be a rushing torrent. A peculiar word is used which indicates the noise of water rushing out from a narrow channel or orifice. One flood seems to call to another, and to make the echoes ring. So do waves of trouble in succession overwhelm the Psalmist, but he does not lose sight of the fact that these are **thy billows**; even the storms are under God's direction.

8. Hence no 'Yet' is needed at the beginning of this verse, and there is none in the Hebrew. Kirkpatrick, as well as many earlier interpreters, renders the verbs of this verse in the past tense, making these clauses to contain a retrospect. But it is better to understand that the Psalmist is here rallying the energies of his soul to trust in One who has not really forgotten him, however appearances may point that way. 'Out of the depths' he cries, and already song and prayer are lifting him Godwards.

I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? 9
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the
enemy?
As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach 10
me;
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
Why art thou cast down, O my soul? 11
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly **43**
nation:
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
For thou art the God of my strength; why hast thou cast 2
me off?

9–11. The words of his appeal follow—first a prayer, then a song. Render in verse 9, 'Let me say unto God'—I will address myself to the God of my life and the rock of my salvation, and urge before Him the soul's insistent question, Why? Such an expostulation often arises from Psalmist and prophet—why this seeming apathy on the part of God, which gives sore occasion to the enemy to blaspheme? Compare Isa. lii. 5. **Oppression of the enemy** here points to foreign invaders.

Render in verse 10, 'As though they would crush my bones,' *lit.* 'with a crushing in my bones'; compare vi. 2, 'my bones are vexed.' The very framework of the body is represented as being shaken by the bitter and cruel taunts of these unbelievers; as we say, 'they pierce my very heart.' The Psalmist responds by chanting his refrain, gathering new strength by the repetition of the old helpful words.

Psalm XLIII.

1. If the verses that follow did not originally form part of Ps. xlii, they must be understood as an additional stanza written by one who found himself in similar circumstances of trial, and deliberately set himself to copy the strain of the original writer. **An ungodly nation,** *lit.* 'loveless'—outside the covenant-bond with God and man—clearly points to heathen destitute of pity, upon whom all remonstrance would be lost.

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the
enemy?
3 O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead
me:
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And to thy tabernacles.
4 Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy:
And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my
God.
5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

---

2. Why go I mourning? A peculiar word is here used indicating a walk 'sad, solitary, slow,' and we might render 'Why go I wearily about in sadness?'

3. A prayer for deliverance couched in unusual but suggestive language. **Light** and **Truth** may be regarded as twin angels of the Presence guiding God's servant as Moses prayed that God would guide him, Exod. xxxiii. 15. Later Jewish writers find a reference to the Urim and Thummim (Light and Perfection) of Exod. xxviii. 30, Lev. viii. 8, which Philo in his allegorical fashion regards as symbolizing the two virtues Illumination and Truth. But in this verse we find grammatical personification of two well-known words, not an allegorical adaptation of a passage in the Law. The Psalmist prays that he may be led by these two celestial Messengers to the outward and material sanctuary which for him was the very presence of God.

4. Then will I go: better 'That I may come unto the altar, &c. . . . and give thanks unto Thee upon the harp, Elohim, my God.' This last somewhat awkward phrase corresponds in Elohistic documents to the much more natural and intelligible 'Jehovah my God.' Compare Exod. xx. 2 and Ps. l. 7.

5. The note of thanksgiving and joy in the last verse rings out more clearly than in any previous part of the whole Psalm, and we may therefore suppose that the refrain now repeated for the third time is to be sung more triumphantly than before. The Psalmist has obtained 'a garland for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,' Isa. lxi. 3.

For the Chief Musician; *a Psalm* of the sons of Korah. Maschil. **44**

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have 1
told us,

PSALM XLIV. A PRAYER IN NATIONAL HUMILIATION.

The chief features of this Psalm are that (1) it is distinctly national, at a period when the sense of national life was strong and a Psalmist could speak of 'our armies'; (2) very serious disaster had overtaken the people, to all appearance more than temporary in character; (3) these calamities are not viewed as a punishment for national sin, but it is possible to plead that Israel has been faithful to Jehovah and is in no danger of falling into idolatry.

It is not easy to fix upon a period which answers to this description, if we bear in mind also that the Psalm is one of an Elohistic collection, occurring early in the second book. Some of the best critics confidently pronounce it to be Maccabaean—a view held as early as the fourth century, and maintained by Calvin, as well as by many moderns. Davidic it seems impossible to suppose it, in spite of the arguments of Delitzsch, and the difficulty of assigning it to the period of the later monarchy lies in the strong assertion of national fidelity to Jehovah and of freedom from idolatry. If, however, this plea be considered, as it probably should, to be relative only, there seems no reason why the Psalm should not be viewed as dating from the period of reform in the time of Hezekiah, when the country was suffering from the Assyrian invasion. All the details cannot be made to fit in with any crisis in the Maccabaean uprising, though it is undeniable that in the general features of the picture that period is the most appropriate. The chief arguments against so late a date are to be drawn from the position of the Psalm thus early in the second book of the Psalter.

The outline of the Psalm is clear. Verses 1-3 celebrate the deliverances which God in old time wrought out for His people. In verses 4-8 the Psalmist claims that the trust of the people in their fathers' God is still complete and confident. But (9-16) God has forsaken them and left them to be trampled down by ruthless enemies, although (17-22) they have been faithful to their part of the covenant and have not 'stretched out hands to any strange god.' An urgent plea for immediate Divine succour (23-26) closes the Psalm.

1. This appeal to the past is common in the writings of prophets and Psalmists. In times of need both individuals and the community solaced themselves with recollections of what God had done for His people at the time of the Exodus and onwards.

What work thou didst in their days, in the days of old.
2 Thou didst drive out the nations with thy hand, and plantedst them in;
Thou didst afflict the peoples, and didst spread them abroad.
3 For they gat not the land in possession by their own sword,
Neither did their own arm save them:
But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance,
Because thou hadst a favour unto them.
4 Thou art my King, O God:
Command deliverance for Jacob.
5 Through thee will we push down our adversaries:

The days of old does not necessarily imply a very late date for the Psalm: compare 'the ancient times' in Isa. xxxvii. 26.

2. The settlement in Canaan rather than the Exodus is fixed upon as an illustration of God's intervention, because the trouble in the Psalm was the overrunning of the country by heathen. At the conquest of Canaan the position was reversed. Emphasis is to be laid upon **them**, i. e. our fathers, in each line of the verse. 'They have told us how it was they, themselves, whom Thou didst plant and cause to multiply.' The metaphor is that of a tree which is first deeply implanted in the soil and then spreads abroad its branches in beauty and strength. See Ps. lxxx. 8-10.

3. Render, 'For not by their own sword did they get possession'; they understood, as do we their descendants in recalling the history that has been handed down, where the secret of their strength lay. **Thou hadst a favour unto them** is the only explanation of Israel's success; see Deut. vii. 7, &c.

4. A sudden and impressive turn, with an emphatic use of the 3rd personal pronoun—'Thou, even Thou Thyself art my King'; the emphasis being strengthened by the use of the singular 'my.' The Psalmist speaks for the nation, but the individualistic form of speech brings home more closely the thought of God's personal relation to His people. The plural **deliverances** implies full and complete salvation.

5. Push down, as with the horns of the wild ox, Deut. xxxiii. 17, or with the horns of iron used symbolically by Zedekiah in 1 Kings xxii. 11. **Tread under** and trample down implies a similar metaphor drawn from the wild beast, Ps. lx. 12; Isa. xiv. 25.

Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up
against us.
For I will not trust in my bow, 6
Neither shall my sword save me.
But thou hast saved us from our adversaries, 7
And hast put them to shame that hate us.
In God have we made our boast all the day long, 8
And we will give thanks unto thy name for ever. [Selah

But now thou hast cast *us* off, and brought us to dishonour; 9
And goest not forth with our hosts.
Thou makest us to turn back from the adversary: 10
And they which hate us spoil for themselves.
Thou hast given us like sheep *appointed* for meat; 11
And hast scattered us among the nations.

---

6. This is one of the verses relied upon by those who maintain a Maccabaean authorship for the Psalm. The parallel is very close with 1 Macc. iii. 18, 19, 'victory in battle standeth not in the multitude of a host,' but Isaiah had taught the same lesson to Hezekiah long before, see 2 Kings xix.

7, 8. But—or perhaps better, 'For'—'it is Thou who hast saved us'; we, as well as our fathers, have experienced Thy goodness and in Thee we still put our trust.

9. Again a sudden change. **But now** is the best way of render-ng a conjunction which properly implies addition, also, or 'further-nore.' Here it might be paraphrased 'and then Thou goest on o'; the very unexpectedness of the sequel and God's desertion of His own people constituting the force of the appeal. The phrase our armies' in A. V.—better, **hosts,** R. V.—gives a false impression f it be understood in the modern sense of a nation that maintains standing army. The same word is used of the 'companies' hat marched forth from Egypt, Exod. xii. 41, and is employed ere in the same general sense.

10. For themselves, i. e. at their will, or to their heart's ontent.

11. Some are butchered; others sold for slaves. There is othing distinctive in the phraseology here which would fix the eriod referred to. Deportation occurred two or three times under e Assyrians, and again at the time of the Babylonish captivity;

12 Thou sellest thy people for nought,
And hast not increased *thy wealth* by their price.
13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours,
A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
14 Thou makest us a byword among the nations,
A shaking of the head among the peoples.
15 All the day long is my dishonour before me,
And the shame of my face hath covered me,
16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth;
By reason of the enemy and the avenger.
17 All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee,
Neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.

---

again under the Persians at the time of Artaxerxes Ochus many Jews were sold as captives, and again by Antiochus Epiphanes.

12. A bitter reproach. 'Thine own people are sold—for a mere nothing; and Thou hast made no gain by the price paid for them.' The boldness of this mode of speech concerning God does not imply irreverence. It is paralleled in Isa. lii. 3, 5, and the meaning for religion is that the cause of God suffers by the overthrow of His people. This is hinted at in verse 16, is stated plainly in Isa. lii. 5, and was distinctly proved by the words of Rabshakeh, 2 Kings xviii. 19, &c.

13, 14. Shame and derision have come upon God's people and that from two quarters—**neighbours** and those **round about us,** such as Edom, Ammon and Moab, more or less akin to Israel, and the **nations,** understood of distinctly heathen peoples at a greater distance. Even allowing somewhat for poetical hyperbole, it is not easy to find a condition of things corresponding to this. The Maccabaean period is not suitable; perhaps none on the whole fits the description better than that of Sennacherib and Hezekiah.

15, 16. Again the Psalmist individualizes. Personal shame is most acutely felt; every Jew would feel outraged and disgraced by the taunts of a Rabshakeh. Those who insulted God's people did dishonour to Himself, and all blasphemy against God is personally resented by His faithful servants. See the close parallels of Ps. lxix. 6, 7, 9, 'the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me.'

17–19. The assertion of national innocence which follows is striking and presents some difficulties. It forms the strongest argument for a Maccabaean date, as the utterance of a martyr-church-nation. Of no period before the Exile could it be said that

Our heart is not turned back, 18
Neither have our steps declined from thy way;
That thou hast sore broken us in the place of jackals, 19
And covered us with the shadow of death.
If we have forgotten the name of our God, 20
Or spread forth our hands to a strange god;
Shall not God search this out? 21
For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; 22
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.
Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? 23
Arise, cast *us* not off for ever.

Israel or Judah was free from the taint of idolatry. But then of no period at all can the language of these verses be said to be true, if taken in its full strength. It must be comparative fidelity that is here asserted, as is suggested by verse 19, 'that Thou shouldest have (thus) sore broken us,' &c. In the time of Josiah, for example, or in the period of reform under Hezekiah such words might fairly be used on the part of the nation when striving to be loyal to the covenant with Jehovah. They were not conscious of national apostasy such as would warrant so severe a punishment. **The place of jackals** and **the shadow of death** refer to the terrible devastation which had made of the country a desert.

20, 21. The national conscience is clear. The Psalmist makes bold to appeal to the Omniscient that the people have been worshipping Jehovah and trying to fulfil His law and have not 'spread forth hands' in prayer to any strange god. It may be rendered 'If we had forgotten, would not God have searched it out?'

22. If the translation **Yea** be preserved, the connexion is, 'Yea, Thou knowest that it is for our fidelity we suffer.' The rendering 'Nay but' is better; so far from having laid themselves open to such punishment, a sense as of Divine injustice oppresses them. Martyrdom in the Christian sense, as intended by Paul when he quoted these words in Rom. viii. 36, was not for the most part understood by the Jews; it was to them a hardship and an unintelligible one, that God's people should suffer.

23. This is shown by the bold apostrophe, **why sleepest thou?** A God who thus leaves His people to their fate must be slumbering. The Talmud tells us that in the time of John Hyrcanus these words were used in the temple in such a way as to cause him to

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
And forgettest our affliction and our oppression?
25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust:
Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.
26 Rise up for our help,
And redeem us for thy lovingkindness' sake.

45 For the Chief Musician; set to Shoshannim; *a Psalm* of the sons of Korah. Maschil. A Song of loves.

1 My heart overfloweth with a goodly matter:

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rebuke the Levites who used them, saying, 'Does God sleep? Hath not the Scripture said, Behold He that keepeth Israel slumbereth not?' But the meaning of the words depends on the spirit in which they are used. The piety and confidence in God of this Psalmist was no less complete than that of Hyrcanus or the writer of Ps. cxxi. 4.

24–26. The 'sleeping' referred to is here explained as synonymous with 'hiding of the face' or apparent forgetfulness; and the 'awaking' is equivalent to 'rising up for the help' of a suffering yet faithful people. The plea that God would act 'for His own lovingkindness' sake' shows that verse 23 expresses the boldness of faith, not of scepticism.

PSALM XLV. A ROYAL MARRIAGE-SONG.

Two things seem tolerably clear about this Psalm. First, that its occasion was the marriage of a king, and secondly that the epithalamium far transcends its occasion. With the view that the Psalm is allegorical throughout, that it has no historical basis, but was primarily intended to refer to spiritual truth and the relation between God and His people, we have no sympathy, and such allegorizing exposition happily does not find the favour it once did. But it is almost equally certain that the Psalmist does idealize and spiritualize the event he celebrated. Not merely that he uses poetical hyperbole, nor that in customary Oriental fashion he glorifies the king and his surroundings, though both these features are present. But the position of this ode in the midst of a number of sacred songs, chiefly intended for temple-worship, goes far to show that in the intention of the writer, or at least in the opinion of the Jewish church, more was intended than meets the eye of the ordinary reader. A royal marriage—of a king with a king's daughter—amongst the chosen people Israel, could not be regarded as a mere secular alliance. If king and queen

I speak the things which I have made touching the
king:

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understood their position, their union was encompassed by associations and fraught with issues much more important than those upon which a conventional court-poet would descant at Tyre or Damascus or Nineveh. And though the sacred lessons of the event are not worked out by the Psalmist, they are suggested, and the instinct of later generations, from the Targum writers onwards, has not been at fault in surmising that 'a greater than Solomon is here.' But how far and in what sense that deeper significance is to be admitted, is a question to which sound exegesis will be very careful in giving an answer.

One proof that the historical occasion was not all-important in the mind of the Psalmist is to be found in the difficulty of determining who is intended and what period is referred to. A Psalm which by competent exegetes has been referred to Solomon, to Ahab, to Jehoram, to Jeroboam II, to a Persian monarch, to a Syrian Alexander and to Ptolemy Philadelphus, cannot have been intended to celebrate with any minute accuracy the immediate and local glories of any king. The oldest and for long the prevailing view, still advocated by some able critics, refers the Psalm to the marriage of Solomon with an Egyptian princess, 1 Kings iii. 1. The mention of a daughter of Tyre has suggested the name of Ahab, who also possessed a palace of ivory, 1 Kings xxii. 39. Delitzsch defends with skill his theory that the marriage of Jehoram with Athaliah is intended. Finally, Cheyne argues in favour of Ptolemy Philadelphus, an Egyptian sovereign who did indeed patronize and promote literature, but who slew two of his own brothers and married his sister. Some critics, who are not satisfied to assign an early date to the Psalm, consider that Solomon is here celebrated by a later Psalmist who idealizes the traditions of 'Solomon in all his glory.' The choice seems to lie between this view and the supposition that one of the kings of the later monarchy is referred to, whose royal descent and status and privileges are dwelt upon, rather than any remarkable excellence of personal character.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 8, 9) is in harmony with the general tenor of Jewish interpretation in applying the words of verse 6 to the Messiah. The figure of marriage is used both in the Old and New Testaments to symbolize the covenant-relation between God and His people, and the author of a Psalm centuries before Christ, equally with Paul the writer of Eph. v. 23–32, would find nothing forced or unnatural in applying language used to describe the sacred relation between man and wife to the still more sacred relation between God and the Church.

My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.
2 Thou art fairer than the children of men;
Grace is poured into thy lips:
Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.
3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty one,
Thy glory and thy majesty.

The title is long and composite. The clauses **For the Precentor, of the sons of Korah, Maschil,** are explained in the Introductions, pp. 14–16, 220, 221. **A Song of loves** describes the subject-matter and **set to 'Lilies'** indicates the tune to which the Psalm was sung.

1. The rhythm of this verse might be literally, if roughly rendered somewhat as follows—

> 'My heart overfloweth, goodly is the theme:
> I am speaking, my work is for a king:
> My tongue is a pen—a ready scribe.'

This exordium seems to point to a subject which inspires the writer as the mere wedding of a secular prince, however joyful and auspicious, would not influence a Hebrew Psalmist. Already at the outset he is lifted above the mere outward aspects of the event.

2. Verses 2–9 describe the bridegroom, his personal excellences, the dignity of his position, and the extent of his kingdom and influence.

Two qualities are selected for eulogy here; physical beauty and gracious speech and demeanour, both being understood as indications of a noble and truly royal character. **Therefore**—i. e. the Psalmist argues and all men may conclude—that the blessing of God rests upon this scion of a favoured house and will rest upon his descendants, **for ever.** This language is not to be understood as literally true of a particular individual, nor as the mere flattery of a courtier, but as a description of what a Jewish king should be, what the individual in question might be and to a considerable extent was.

3. Verses 3–5 strike a martial note. It does not follow that the king was a noted warrior, or that he was about to enter on a campaign. He is addressed as a 'mighty hero,' and the Psalmist in prophetic spirit anticipates victory for his arms and bids him use his power righteously and well. R. V. shows that 'glory and majesty' are attributes with which this king is to gird himself, just as he girds himself with the sword and other insignia of royalty. The words used are such as can properly apply only to a king who is God's vicegerent.

And in thy majesty ride on prosperously, 4
Because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness:
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
Thine arrows are sharp; 5
The peoples fall under thee;
They are in the heart of the king's enemies.
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: 6

---

4. Render, 'Pass through, ride on, in the cause of truth, humility and righteousness, and let thy right hand teach thee terrible things,' R. V. marg. The opening word **And in thy majesty** seems to have crept in by mistake from the last verse. It might well have been repeated for the sake of emphasis, but the construction does not readily admit of this. The king is bidden to use his strength not only to defend the true and the right, but in all kindly clemency to care for the meek, i. e. the oppressed who cannot, or will not assert themselves. If this be his aim, the poet exhorts him to put forth all his energy and he shall be able to perform awe-inspiring deeds. The phraseology here again is more properly used of God, see 2 Sam. vii. 23, Isa. lxiv. 3, and of the king as God's representative.

5. The language here is condensed and abrupt, the second line forming a kind of parenthesis between the first and third. The R. V., however, gives the meaning well, and the vigour of the Psalmist's 'rapid pen' is obvious. First the arrows are seen hurtling through the air, then the hostile ranks are thinned as one enemy after another falls, lastly the shafts are found to have penetrated the very hearts of the king's foes.

6. The Psalmist now turns more specifically to the king's moral qualities, which are described from the ideal point of view. In this and the following verse is described what every Jewish king ought to be and it is hoped this king may be, perhaps is. The translation of the first line has been much debated, on the score of text, grammar and theology. If the received text be correct, the following renderings are possible.

a. **Thy throne, O God,** as in A. V., R. V. text, the versions and all the older commentators. If the Psalm is not directly Messianic, however, this direct address to the king as Elohim is strangely bold. To say that the judges were sometimes described as Elohim (Exod. xxi. 6, &c.), if it be true that they were; or that the house of David shall be 'as God,' Zech. xii. 8; or that the word Elohim is sometimes used in a secondary and lower sense—is hardly enough to warrant this direct address to the king in the vocative, O Elohim! *b.* 'God is thy throne' or 'thy throne is

A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
7 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness:
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
8 All thy garments *smell of* myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia;

God'—two ways of saying that the monarchy is divinely founded and supported. But the first is a very awkward way of expressing such a truth and it is questionable whether the second is idiomatically admissible. *c.* Some of the best authorities favour the rendering of R. V. marg. 'Thy throne is the throne of God.' This interpretation, if not the simplest and most obvious, is most in harmony with verse 7, with the rest of the Psalm and the usage of O. T. It reminds the king of his theocratic dignity, that he rules in virtue of Divine authority and ought to govern in accordance with this fundamental thought of Israelitish monarchy, as laid down e. g. in 2 Sam. vii.

In Heb. i. 8 the LXX is quoted, and the Greek permits (1) Thy throne, O God, (2) God is thy throne, (3) Thy throne is God, as possible renderings. Almost all ancient commentators take it for granted that (1) is the meaning. Bishop Westcott, however, argues for (2) and contends that the argument of the writer of Hebrews is perhaps more cogent if the office and endowment of the Son are described as Divine, than if the Divine name be ascribed to Him, for this latter 'would obscure the thought.' It must certainly be said that in interpreting the Hebrew and expounding the Psalm, either Elohim is used abruptly and strangely in its direct application to the king, even in its lower sense, as in R. V. text, or better, in the present writer's judgement, the translation of R. V. margin should be accepted.

7. The phrase **God, thy God** in an Elohistic Psalm stands for the more natural and normal 'Jehovah, thy God' elsewhere. The occurrence of this phrase here is an additional argument for refusing to believe that the king is called Elohim and for adopting the rendering advocated above.

'Anoint with the oil of gladness' does not refer to the consecration of the king to his office, but to the rejoicings of the marriage-day and the general tokens of prosperity, symbolized by oil; compare 'oil of joy' in Isa. lxi. 3.

8. The spices here mentioned must not be confounded with the myrrh and aloes of modern commerce. **Myrrh** was an Arabic balsam; **aloes** the product of an aromatic Indian tree, now known as eagle-wood; the word translated **cassia** is not the same as that in Exod. xxx. 24, an ingredient of the sacred oil, but

Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made
thee glad.
Kings' daughters are among thy honourable women: 9
At thy right hand doth stand the queen in gold of Ophir.
Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; 10
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;
So shall the king desire thy beauty: 11
For he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.
And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; 12
Even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

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indicates a powdered fragrant bark, akin to cinnamon. Spicery and unguents are both characteristic of Oriental festivity.

The interior of the king's palace is magnificent with inlaid ivory; music—the word is unusual, but there is no doubt that R. V. correctly gives the meaning—sounds through the halls as the royal bridegroom arrives.

9. One element of dignity remains to be mentioned, the numerous highborn wives of the monarch. The blending of actual with ideal is here most marked. Polygamy was, however, practised by patriarchs and kings and was permitted, though not directly sanctioned in O. T. The title used for the queen-consort, who occupies the place of honour, is a late one connected with the Persian, see Neh. ii. 6; Dan. v. 23. It is possible, however, that this word, like that for 'stringed instruments,' is a mark of North Palestinian dialect.

Ophir has not been certainly identified. Probably the gold was found in Eastern Arabia, though conjecture has connected the name of Solomon (see 1 Kings xxvii. 28) with the very ancient gold-mines of Zimbabwe in Mashona-land.

10, 11. The bride is addressed in terms appropriate to a foreigner who had as yet hardly seen her husband, but whose duty it was to make his home and religion her own. The typical or allegorical meaning of the Psalm cannot appropriately be pressed in detail, when the references to Oriental ideas of marriage are concerned.

Render, 'For he is thy lord and do thou homage unto him.' The lordship intended is that recognized authority of the husband (Gen. xviii. 12), which demanded submission from the wife. To translate **Lord** is misleading and in conjunction with the word **worship** tends to confuse the allegorical with the literal meaning.

12. The interpretation of this verse which would make it one sentence, addressed to the queen as a Tyrian princess, 'And,

13 The king's daughter within *the palace* is all glorious:
Her clothing is inwrought with gold.
14 She shall be led unto the king in broidered work:
The virgins her companions that follow her
Shall be brought unto thee.
15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be led:
They shall enter into the king's palace.
16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
Whom thou shalt make princes in all the earth.
17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations:

O daughter of Tyre, the rich shall intreat thy favour,' though influentially supported, is open to many objections. The verse is best understood as consisting of two clauses, one predicate serving for both. Render:—

> 'And the daughter of Tyre shall seek thy favour with a gift,
> Yea the richest among the peoples shall thus do homage.'

The important service rendered by Hiram to Solomon probably suggested the idea that the city of Tyre, the wealthiest of all the neighbouring powers, should thus pay respect to the new king and queen.

13. R. V. makes clear the meaning of **within**; the inner part of the house belongs to the women, and the queen's state apartments are referred to, from which she passes to the presence-chamber to meet her lord.

14, 15. The state procession is here described. The 'embroidered work' here mentioned has been understood (1) of the variegated carpets on which the queen walks, (2) of the tapestry-lined rooms through which she passes, and (3) of the embroidered raiment in which she is clothed. The last explanation is to be preferred. Bridesmaids in considerable numbers would form not only part of the wedding procession, but afterwards of the royal household. References to these marriage customs are to be found in Jer. vii. 34; 1 Macc. ix. 37; Matt. xxv. 1, and in the Song of Songs.

16, 17. A closing address to the king. The offspring of the marriage is to be numerous and distinguished. The Psalmist speaks as a prophet and partly wishes, partly foretells, that the memory of the prince he celebrates shall be widespread and long continued. His sons are to be **princes** not only 'in all the land,' as some would render it, but **in all the earth**; for **the peoples,** i. e. nations generally, will in future days praise or give thanks to him as a renowned and beneficent monarch.

Therefore shall the peoples give thee thanks for ever and
ever.

For the Chief Musician; *a Psalm* of the sons of Korah; set to Alamoth. A Song. **46**

God is our refuge and strength, 1
A very present help in trouble.

Some difficulty may perhaps be experienced in these closing verses and in other parts of the Psalm, because the words used seem more appropriate in reference to God rather than to man. The solution is not to be found by making the Psalm wholly allegorical or mystical, nor by intermingling, which means confusing, the literal and spiritual methods of interpretation, but by steadfastly holding to the literal and historical throughout, with the understanding that the king here addressed is viewed not so much in his personal and individual character, but the head of a theocracy and in theory at least a representative of God upon the earth. This facilitates the Messianic *application* of the words, without introducing the numerous difficulties raised by a directly Messianic interpretation and an allegorization in detail. On the whole subject, see Introd. to vol. ii.

PSALM XLVI. THE NATION'S STRONGHOLD.

This and the two following Psalms may be assigned with considerable confidence to the time of Hezekiah, when Jerusalem was so seriously threatened by the army of Sennacherib and so wonderfully delivered, according to Isaiah's prophecy, by a striking Divine intervention. The arguments in favour of this date are such as these. (1) The language points more definitely than is usual with the Psalmists to an historical event of a notable character. (2) Unquestionably the event which most fully corresponds to the phraseology employed is the occasion mentioned. There is indeed little choice. The view of Delitzsch that the victory of Berachah gained over Moab, Ammon and Edom (2 Chron. xx) is referred to, is the best alternative, but it is open to the objection that in these Psalms the city of Jerusalem itself is the centre both of the danger and the triumph. The invasion of Judah by Syria and Israel in the time of Ahaz (Isa. vii), which has also been suggested, is improbable on several grounds. (3) The close correspondence between these Psalms and the language of Isaiah (chs. xxx, xxxvii, &c.) both in general tone and to some extent in detailed phraseology. It may be added (4) that the consensus of critical opinion is in this case more united than usual; though it is admitted that no more than strong probability can be shown, and

2 Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the
seas;
3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.
[Selah

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some critics steadfastly refuse to admit that any Psalms are pre-Exilic.

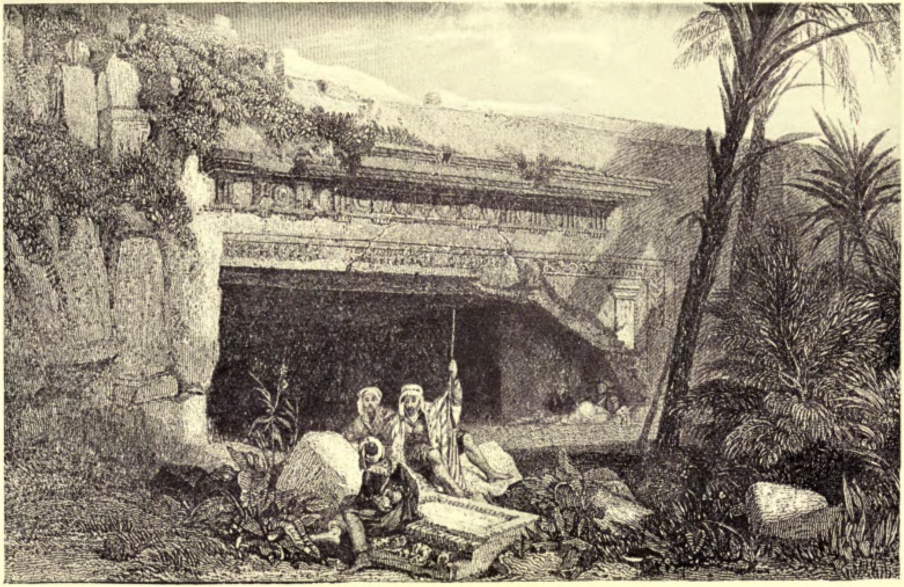
The keynote of this Psalm is struck in the opening verse—'God is our stronghold.' It is repeated in the refrain which occurs in verses 7 and 11. The structure of the Psalm would lead us to expect the refrain at the end of verse 3 also, the thrice repeated Selah marking out the several stanzas. The first of these stanzas, verses 1–3, is general in its assertion that God is the refuge of His people; the second, verses 4–7, refers to the recent deliverance; while the third, 8–11, becomes general again and anticipates the vindication of Jehovah as the God of the whole earth. The phrase in the title, **set to Alamoth**, probably corresponds to our 'soprano.' This may mean that it was intended for women's voices, but more probably refers to the instruments used; see 1 Chron. xv. 20, 'with psalteries set to Alamoth.' We might perhaps compare the modern viola, violoncello, double bass, as illustrations of stringed instruments of different tone and quality.

Luther's fondness for this Psalm is well known; in the sixteenth century his spirited version *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott* brought home the ancient truth to modern times. Wesley's dying words, 'The best of all is, God is with us,' were indirectly inspired by the language of the refrain, verses 7 and 11.

1. The two words used in the first line mean respectively 'shelter' (see Job xxiv. 8) and 'stability' (Job xii. 16; Ps. xxx. 7). The idea is well brought out by Isaiah in chs. xxviii and xxx, where he urges the people not to trust in alliance with Egypt or any other nation, but to find their stronghold in Jehovah.

No better English translation of the second line could be adopted than that of R. V., but the words run literally, 'A help in straits is he found exceedingly,' and the conjugation and tense of the word used for 'found' point to an actual occurrence in history in which God has shown Himself to be what the word describes.

2, 3. These verses as they stand must be read together. In verse 2 render 'moved *into* the heart of the seas.' If, as is probable, the refrain originally appeared at the end of verse 3, as in 7 and 11, we should read in 3, 'Let its waters roar and foam; let the mountains quake with their proud swelling! Still we fear not, for God is with us.'



Drawn by J. D. Harding

JERUSALEM: TOMBS OF THE KINGS

There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city 4
  of God,
The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: 5
God shall help her, and that right early.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: 6
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
The Lord of hosts is with us; 7

The confidence here expressed has been engendered by the recent Divine manifestation. It needs a prophet's faith and insight to be thus confident *before* help had been vouchsafed and when ruin seemed imminent. The philosopher pictures the just man as impregnable in himself, wrapping himself in his own virtue (see the well-known passage in Horace, *Odes*, iii. 3. 7); the saint finds his strength in God.

4. Twice in the Book of Isaiah is the presence of Jehovah compared to a river; in viii. 6, where 'Siloah's brook' is contrasted with the great river of Assyria; and in xxxiii. 21, where 'Jehovah is with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams.' The Psalmist's use of the figure differs slightly from both. But the idea is fundamentally the same: God's presence is the joy and refreshment, as well as the defence of His people. In construction this verse is an exclamation—'A river! its channels make glad,' &c., the next verse giving the explanation. In N. T. phraseology the stream is that of 'grace.'

5. R. V. preserves in its text the old idiomatic rendering, **and that right early.** But its marginal rendering 'at the dawn of morning,' or 'when the morn appeareth,' gives the meaning of the Hebrew better and suggests the morning of deliverance mentioned in Isa. xxxvii. 36. It also preserves the parallel with such passages as Pss. xxx. 5, cxxx. 6, &c.

6. The effect of what has been called the 'staccato' movement n this verse is heightened if we read, **nations raged, kingdoms were moved,** &c. There is no article in the original. The **voice** s that of thunder, the 'melting' is the dissolution of all opposition n abject fear.

7. For the full meaning of the phrase *Yahwĕh Tsebāōth*, **Jehovah f hosts,** see detached note, p. 359. It is found more than 120 imes in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and several times in the Psalms of he second and third Books. Whatever the origin and history f the expression, its general significance points, as the LXX ranslation indicates, to God All-Sovereign, whilst the **God of**

The God of Jacob is our refuge. [Selah

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD,
What desolations he hath made in the earth.
9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariots in the fire.
10 Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.
11 The LORD of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. [Selah

47 For the Chief Musician; a Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 O clap your hands, all ye peoples;

Jacob is the God of the nation. For **with us** compare the name Immanuel, 'God is with us,' in Isa. vii. 14, viii. 8, 10.

The word for **refuge** is not the same as in verse 1, it means 'high tower,' R.V. marg., or high fortress.

8. The Psalmist assumes from time to time the position of a teacher; compare xxxiv. 11, 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me,' &c. The invitation here is chiefly intended for the nations around. The second line of this verse rather means, 'Who hath done astonishing things in the earth.' It is not the destructive element in God's intervention on which the Psalmist lays stress.

9. He pictures rather the overthrow of the great military power of Assyria before the comparatively unwarlike people of Judah as a victory of peace; much as in the early part of the nineteenth century the overthrow of Napoleon was regarded.

The word translated **chariots** is not the usual one for war-chariot. It means rather 'waggons' as in Gen. xlv. 19; some versions read 'shields.' But 1 Sam. xvii. 20 shows that these vehicles, whether they corresponded to what we call baggage-waggons or not, were associated with war.

10, 11. Be still, or 'Desist,' cease your vain strivings: R.V. marg. 'Let be.' The God of Jacob is the God of the whole earth, He means to show Himself as such, and the nations must learn that they are but mortal men. Ps. ix. 20.

PSALM XLVII. THE KING OF NATIONS.

This Psalm should be read in connexion with xlvi and xlviii, and it may be both compared and contrasted with them. It

Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For the LORD Most High is terrible; 2
He is a great King over all the earth.
He shall subdue the peoples under us, 3
And the nations under our feet.
He shall choose our inheritance for us, 4
The excellency of Jacob whom he loved. [Selah
God is gone up with a shout, 5

---

exhibits the same exultation and traces it to the same source. But it is less definitely historical, and dwells upon what may be called the Divine side of the event celebrated. The theme is—God is King, let Israel and all nations triumph in His victorious supremacy. It is used by the Jews at the Feast of Trumpets (Num. xxix. 1), and by the Christian Church on Ascension Day. It may be divided into two stanzas or strophes, 1-4 and 5-9, but this short and vigorous lyric is itself but one trumpet-blast, with many ringing, melodious notes.

1. When Saul was appointed king, he was greeted with shouting and the cry 'Let the king live!' (1 Sam. x. 24). When Joash came to the crown, the same cry was made and 'all the people clapped their hands,' 2 Kings xi. 12. The two kinds of demonstration are here united to celebrate Jehovah as God of the nations. The rendering should, of course, be **peoples** (R. V.), not 'people' (A. V.).

2. *Yahweh 'Elyon*, **the LORD Most High,** unites two names of God, the former indicating the covenant God of Israel, the latter the sovereign of the whole earth.

3, 4. Four various renderings are possible of the tenses in these verses, and all have found supporters. We might render 'He subdued,' 'He hath subdued,' 'He subdueth,' or 'He shall subdue,' the peoples under us; while some able critics render the tense in verse 4 by the optative, 'May he choose!' Without discussing the matter in detail, there are good reasons for preferring the translation of R. V. marg., 'He subdueth—chooseth—loveth'; understanding that a general truth is intended, with special reference to the recent deliverance and its illustration of the broad principle of God's care for His people. The least satisfactory view is that which makes the passage refer to the original settlement in Canaan.

The land is the **inheritance** of Israel, inasmuch as he is God's son and heir, and the **excellency**, or 'pride,' of Jacob, since he boasts of it and exults in it as God's gracious gift.

5. The anthropomorphism which represents God as 'going up'

The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
6 Sing praises to God, sing praises:
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
7 For God is the King of all the earth:
Sing ye praises with understanding.
8 God reigneth over the nations:
God sitteth upon his holy throne.
9 The princes of the peoples are gathered together
To be the people of the God of Abraham:
For the shields of the earth belong unto God;
He is greatly exalted.

---

or 'coming down' in relation to the affairs of men is drawn from the idea of an earthly sovereign who may be said to come down as from his throne to investigate and intervene (Gen. xi. 5, 7), to administer justice among his subjects or to overthrow his enemies (Isa. lxiv. 1, 3); and who, when battle is over and victory won, returns to his palace in triumph. The ascension into heaven is naturally suggested by the phrase of this verse, see lxviii. 18.

6, 7. The word here repeated four times and translated **Sing praises** refers to instrumental rather than vocal music, or at least implies that the singing is accompanied. An alternative rendering would be, 'Make ye melody.' R. V. marg., 'in a skilful psalm,' is better than the text **with understanding.** The note shows that the word 'Maschil' is that found in the title of Ps. xlv and many other Psalms.

8. Render, 'God hath become King—hath taken His seat'—since here a fact rather than a general truth is intended, recent history having proved that Jehovah has asserted His right and vindicated His claim to the homage of the nations.

9. A verse of double length brings the Psalm to a close with a noble and inspiring prophecy. It pictures a great gathering of the nations with their leaders at their head, to render homage to the God of Israel. The rendering of R. V., To be **the people of the God of Abraham,** is the only possible one, if the received text be retained, the marginal rendering, 'Unto the people,' implying a strained construction. It is more likely that the LXX and other versions are right, that a preposition has dropped out and that we should read, 'Together with the people of the God of Abraham.'

shields means princes, see Ps. lxxxix. 18, where 'shield' and 'king' are used synonymously. By a fine artistic touch the

A Song; a Psalm of the sons of Korah. **48**

Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, 1
In the city of our God, in his holy mountain.
Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, 2
Is mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north,

---

lyric closes upon the lofty key-note, 'Very highly is He become exalted!'

PSALM XLVIII. THE NATION'S SECURITY.

In the trilogy of Psalms, xlvi and xlviii are companions, with the shorter and more general Ps. xlvii interposed between them. The language of this Psalm points even more emphatically to the overthrow of Sennacherib's army as the occasion of all three. One or two slight difficulties in the way of this reference are dealt with in the notes. The Psalm is divided into two parts by the 'Selah' at the end of verse 8: the former part describing the deliverance effected, and the latter the reflections and lessons suggested. It is used on Whit Sunday in a large part of the Church Catholic, being understood as describing the glory of the Church founded at Pentecost and the secret of its strength and beauty.

1. The opening verse shows that not so much the glory of the Church-nation is celebrated, as the glory of the God from whom her whole glory is reflected.

highly: rather, 'Exceeding worthy to be praised.'

his holy mountain had come to be almost synonymous with the city which was situated upon it.

2. Jerusalem, Florence, Athens, Rome—each has its own characteristic loveliness, but the first is still unsurpassed among earth's fair cities. It is here described as 'Raised aloft in beauty.' Stanley's description, in his *Sinai and Palestine*, ch. iii, of the 'mountain city, breathing a mountain air and enthroned on a mountain fastness,' is well known and often quoted. With this should be compared Dr. G. A. Smith's remarks on its possessing 'none of the natural conditions of a great city' (*Hist. Geog. Holy Land*, p. 319).

on **the sides of the north:** a difficult phrase. Many modern commentators would interpret in the light of Isa. xiv. 13, where 'the uttermost parts of the north' indicates the sacred mountain in the extreme north which in Assyrian mythology was the abode of the gods, like the Greek Olympus. But such a reference is quite out of place here. Cheyne regards the words as a gloss which crept in through a scribe's regarding the phrase in Isaiah as a parallel passage; but this is to cut a knot which it is hard to untie. Taking the words as they stand, the region **Beautiful in**

The city of the great King.
3 God hath made himself known in her palaces for a refuge.
4 For, lo, the kings assembled themselves,
They passed by together.
5 They saw it, then were they amazed;
They were dismayed, they hasted away.
6 Trembling took hold of them there;
Pain, as of a woman in travail.
7 With the east wind
Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish.

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elevation, the joy of the whole earth is either described in three clauses—(1) Mount Zion, city of David; (2) the sides of the north, viz. Mount Moriah and the temple; and (3) the city of the great King, Jerusalem proper; or better, as Delitzsch suggests, in two clauses—(1) Zion, the temple-hill at the north-east corner, mentioned by itself, with (2) Jerusalem, the city proper, lying as if at its feet.

3. Render, 'for a high fortress,' as in xlvi. 7.

4-7. These verses point to a definite, sudden and remarkable deliverance. The chief difficulty in referring them to the Assyrian invasion is the mention of **kings** in verse 4. but it is not unduly straining the phrase to apply it to the vassal-kings of Sennacherib. He is represented in Isa. x. 8 as saying, 'Are not my princes all of them kings?' Delitzsch's reference to the confederate forces at Beracah (2 Chron. xx) fails in appropriateness, inasmuch as the attack of Moab and Ammon was not directly against Jerusalem.

4. They passed by together: i. e. over the frontier, from stage to stage of the hostile expedition, as described in Isa. x. 28-32.

5. They saw. The city is not mentioned, but is obviously intended. There was nothing to correspond with this in the Moabite invasion. Caesar came, saw, conquered; Rabshakeh saw, was amazed, fled away.

6, 7. Two striking figures are employed to describe the panic and overthrow—the anguish of a woman in travail, and a storm shattering the strongest vessels. Tarshish stands, in the uncertain geography of the time, for a maritime country in the extreme west (Tartessos in south-west Spain?): but the phrase **ships of Tarshish** here and Isa. ii. 16 is used to describe large vessels generally; compare our 'East Indiaman.'

With the east wind. 'The day of the east wind' (Isa. xxvii. 8) is a proverbial expression for the most formidable kind of tempest.

As we have heard, so have we seen 8
In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God:
God will establish it for ever. [Selah
We have thought on thy lovingkindness, O God, 9
In the midst of thy temple.
As is thy name, O God, 10
So is thy praise unto the ends of the earth:
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
Let mount Zion be glad, 11
Let the daughters of Judah rejoice,
Because of thy judgements.
Walk about Zion, and go round about her: 12
Tell the towers thereof.
Mark ye well her bulwarks, 13
Consider her palaces;
That ye may tell it to the generation following.

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8. As it has been in the past, so we have experienced it in the present, and therefore we hope for the future. Zion's God is still our own.

9. The word translated **thought** means originally 'to compare,' 'to liken,' hence it stands for the brooding contemplation which studies all the aspects of a subject and prepares the way for resolution and action. The sanctuary is the place for such pondering.

10. God has, so to speak, vindicated His reputation; the nations now may learn what Israel has long known concerning their righteous Ruler.

11. The Psalmist next turns to Judah, who has chiefly benefited. **Mount Zion** is the capital, **daughters of Judah** the surrounding villages. **Judgements** means acts of righteous interposition such as that which overtook the army of the haughty invader.

12. The lately besieged inhabitants especially are to learn their lesson. **Tell,** i. e. 'count,' not as the enemy had done in derision of the city's feeble defences (Isa. xxxiii. 18), but with the pride of those who know that their real strength is in the presence of Jehovah.

13. Consider: i. e. the lesson to be learned from the fact that after such an attack these palaces and bulwarks still stand intact. Compare Isa. xxxvii. 33, 'He shall not come unto this city, . . . nor cast a mount against it,' &c. The story is to be told to children's children as a proof of the statement with which the Psalm closes.

14 For this God is our God for ever and ever:
He will be our guide *even* unto death.

49 For the Chief Musician; a Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 Hear this, all ye peoples;

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14. There is no doubt about the general meaning of this beautiful verse. But the Hebrew will not bear the translation **unto death,** nor is this the phrase we should expect here. Many conjectures have been made, but if the present text is to be retained, the most probable rendering is:—

> 'For such is God, even our God:
> He will guide us for evermore. *Al-muth.*'

The last word causes the difficulty, and it may refer to a tune as in the title of Ps. ix, *Al-muth-labben*: or with a different vocalization, *set to Alamoth*, as in Ps. xlvi. If the latter explanation is accepted, the word belongs to the title of the next Psalm. The almost endless variations in the versions and the commentators testify to a difficulty which cannot now be entirely removed, but no change of rendering seriously affects the meaning.

PSALM XLIX. THE VANITY OF EARTHLY PROSPERITY.

As the interest of the three preceding Psalms was historical and national, so the importance of this is entirely abstract and moral. It is confessedly, emphatically didactic. A problem of life is exercising the Psalmist which others faced in their own fashion, as in Pss. xxxvii and lxxiii. None of the philosophers even yet have solved it—the complete harmonizing of the material and moral elements in human life, the adjustment of the balance between personal character and outward lot and condition. It seemed to the Psalmist, as to so many others, that earthly wealth and influence rule; that the rich man is the strong man, whatever his character; and that material forces have the upper hand in human affairs. A second thought shows him that the balance is redressed by death. The richest and strongest must die; no wealth or influence will purchase immunity from the common lot. Hence 'man that is in honour' must learn his lesson, and those not similarly favoured need not doubt or despair of the triumph of righteousness.

Whether the thought of this Psalmist goes further, has been questioned. Whether, that is, he has a glimpse of a state beyond the grave in which the inequalities of the present will be completely removed, whether we are to take into account not only death but that which comes after death. The answer given

Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:
Both low and high, 2
Rich and poor together.
My mouth shall speak wisdom; 3
And the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

---

by different interpreters varies. The fact that there is such a difference proves that the glimpse of a future state, if gained at all, can have been only a passing one, and the language in which it is expressed must be vague and ambiguous. So we shall find it in expounding the verses in detail; and therefore, while not excluding the possibility of the Psalmist's hope on a point concerning which there had been no express revelation, it is clear that little can be built upon phraseology, the exact meaning of which is still debated.

The Psalm itself gives no clue as to its date, except that verses 3 and 4 would point to a period—say about the time of Hezekiah—when teachers known as 'the wise,' or gnomic moralists who uttered ethical maxims on the conduct of life, taught and flourished. The parallel passages in Job and Proverbs probably point in the same direction.

After an introduction, longer and more formal than usual, verses 1-4, the Psalm divides itself into two parts, each ending with the same words, verses 12 and 20. The same thesis is propounded in both—that wealth cannot save from death, but the earlier half of the Psalm deals more fully with the present life and the second with the power of Sheol. The style of the Psalm is fresh and vigorous, and the treatment of the subject, within the limits laid down, powerful and impressive.

1, 2. The point of view of the Psalmist is universal. He addresses not Jews, but the nations at large. The 'wisdom-literature' of the O. T. is characterized by this wider outlook upon the world and life, and the topics discussed in this Psalm concern not Judaism only, but humanity.

The second line might be rendered 'All ye that dwell in this fleeting world.' Lessons are to be announced which concern the children of mankind as a whole and the sons of (eminent) men in particular. So we might vainly try to paraphrase the Hebrew, in which two words for 'man' are used, excellently paraphrased in **low and high,** i. e. low-born and high-born, together.

3, 4. Four words here used are characteristic of the 'wisdom-literature.' Wisdom and understanding have the special meaning which attaches to the proverbial philosophy characteristic of the wise; see especially Prov. i-ix, a passage of later date than

4 I will incline mine ear to a parable:
I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,
When iniquity at my heels compasseth me about?
6 They that trust in their wealth,
And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
7 None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother,
Nor give to God a ransom for him:
8 (For the redemption of their soul is costly,
And must be let alone for ever:)

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some other parts of the book. The words translated **parable** and **dark saying** (or, 'riddle') are often joined together, as in Ps. lxxviii. 2; Prov. i. 6; they refer to the form in which the instruction of wisdom was conveyed. The terms 'proverb' and 'aphorism' would convey the meaning to modern ears.

5. Wherefore should I fear? &c. The Psalmist had evidently himself been tempted to fear in days when evil men had the mastery over him. Such temptation, always strong, is of course indefinitely stronger in countries where arbitrary power prevails and there is no even-handed administration of justice such as is taken for granted in modern civilized Western States.

In the second line, R. V. text and margin lead to the same point, though in the text the emphasis lies upon evil, in the margin upon evil men, as dogging the Psalmist's steps and seeking to trip him up and overthrow him.

6, 7. The temptation is met by the thought of the strict limitations of the power of wealth. One thing the rich man cannot do, redeem any friend—a suggested and not improbable emendation would give 'redeem himself'—from the power of death. 'Death lays his icy hand on kings.'

Money cannot purchase the boon of life. Under the Mosaic law, a man whose ox had gored a neighbour to death was liable to lose his life, but he might save himself by paying a fine or ransom, Exod. xxi. 28–32. But a murderer might not thus purchase immunity from punishment, Num. xxxv. 31. In this case no **brother,** i. e. friend, however dear, can be saved from death by the wealthy man; still less, of course, can he save himself.

8. The A. V. rendering, 'And it ceaseth for ever,' is distinctly inferior to the older P. B. V., 'so that he must let that alone for ever,' revived in more accurate form in R. V.

soul means 'life,' and to avoid ambiguity, the latter word is to be preferred in the text.

That he should still live alway, 9
That he should not see corruption.
For he seeth that wise men die, 10
The fool and the brutish together perish,
And leave their wealth to others.
Their inward thought is, *that* their houses *shall continue* 11
for ever,
And their dwelling places to all generations;
They call their lands after their own names.
But man abideth not in honour: 12
He is like the beasts that perish.

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9. Render, 'That he should live on always,
That he should not see the grave,' i. e. die.

10. The connexion of thought here is not obvious at first. R. V. marg. shows that the translation in the text is not quite satisfactory, but the alternative presented is still less so. The choice lies between **For he seeth,** in the sense of 'he must see'; and 'Nay, surely he seeth' or 'must see.' The two renderings lead substantially to the same conclusion, but by means of two different interpretations, both legitimate, of the introductory particle.

The words well rendered **fool and brutish** mean the obstinately self-confident and the grossly stupid.

11. A very slight change in the order of letters in one word gives a reading which is followed by LXX, Targ., and all the earlier versions, see R. V. marg., 'Their graves are their houses for ever, their dwelling-places,' &c. This fits better with the next line, the word 'And' not being found in the original; it harmonizes better with the context, which is not concerned with the 'inward thought' of these men; and is more in accord with the general tenor of the Psalm. Some good authorities, moreover, question whether **inward thought** is a legitimate translation.

The last line adds a touch of irony. These men who have solemnly tried to perpetuate their memory by giving their names to large estates dwell each in his narrow house; a body for which 'a kingdom was too small a bound' finds now 'two paces of the vilest earth is room enough.'

12. With the above reading in verse 11, render here: 'And (so) man (being, or, however he be) in honour, abideth not.' His end, if he have no deeper and firmer foundation than his wealth on which to rest, is like that of the brutes that pass into silence.

13 This their way is their folly:
Yet after them men approve their sayings. [Selah
14 They are appointed as a flock for Sheol;
Death shall be their shepherd:
And the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;
And their beauty shall be for Sheol to consume, that there be no habitation for it.
15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol:
For he shall receive me. [Selah

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13. This verse apparently belongs in thought to the previous part of the Psalm, and much is to be said for its transposition to a place before the refrain in verse 12. Taking the text as it is, the meaning seems to be: 'This is the way,' i. e. lot or condition, 'of them that are foolishly self-confident, and of those who after them approve their sayings,' *lit.* 'find pleasure in their mouth.' They, and all who are like them, end in corruption.

14. A striking verse, which R. V. for the first time makes plain in English. These men pass into Sheol like a flock of sheep, Death is their grim shepherd, their 'form'—not their **beauty,** but all that appears of them—is food for the grave: it no longer needs a dwelling-place, it vanishes into dust.

In this exposition, however, we have passed over the clause, 'In the morning the upright shall rule over them.' A contrast is clearly intended, but its exact scope is not clear. To find here an allusion to the resurrection-morning would be an anachronism, yet on the earth this superiority could only be made manifest by some vindication of the character of the righteous in the dawn of that new day which is to illumine the earth. This appears to be the meaning, but the words are few and obscure.

15. The same uncertainty attaches to the meaning of this verse. But if we do not ask questions which the Psalmist never professed to answer, because the light of revelation did not enable him to do so, the positive truth which he would express is plain. God only can deal with the power of Sheol, He alone can 'redeem' from it, in the sense of arresting or over-ruling its tyrannous hand. I leave myself with Him, He will take me. It is when we ask How, Where, When? that the Psalmist is silent, wisely and necessarily so. Thus the teaching of this Psalm corresponds with that of Ps. xvi; the writer enjoys communion with God and is content to leave all issues in His hands. An allusion to the

Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, 16
When the glory of his house is increased:
For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; 17
His glory shall not descend after him.
Though while he lived he blessed his soul, 18
And men praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself,
He shall go to the generation of his fathers; 19
They shall never see the light.
Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, 20
Is like the beasts that perish.

---

story of Enoch, Gen. v. 24, may be intended. On the other hand, no one can certainly say that more *must be* meant than deliverance from the peril of premature and violent death to which the self-confident wicked were liable.

16, 17. The Psalmist returns to the 'fear' by which he was haunted, see verse 5. He has been delivered himself from this spectre, and as a teacher he would deliver others. If death forms the term of the rich man's wealth and influence, the oppressed need not fear the oppressor. The bubble disappears from the river, though the noise of the foam was great.

18. Better, in the present tense, 'Though in his life-time he blesseth his soul,' i.e. congratulates himself, 'counteth himself happy' (P.B.V.), and receives the congratulations of others, as successful men always do.

19. Of the three translations given in R.V. text and margin, the best is that of the text, for 'it' refers to the soul, and in English the meaning is made clearer by saying **He.** On the other hand, in the second line we prefer the margin, 'He goeth to his fathers, Who shall never more see the light.'

20. The refrain as in verse 10, with the significant addition, **and understandeth not.** The reader is supposed to bear in mind throughout the Psalm that by the man who is in honour, i.e. possessed of outward splendour, is intended one who can boast of this and nothing more. He has no understanding of, or insight into, the real meaning of life. But here this is for the first time explicitly stated.

This distinction justifies the contrast drawn between the self-confident fool on the one hand, and on the other the upright as in verse 14, or the Psalmist himself as in verse 15. These latter are not freed from death entirely, for wise men die, verse 10; but they do not perish as do others; while the Psalmist has gained

50 A Psalm of Asaph.

1 God, *even* God, the LORD, hath spoken,

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a bright though passing glimpse of possibilities in the future for those whom God 'redeems' and 'takes.'

PSALM L. TRUE SACRIFICE AND WORSHIP.

Another didactic Psalm; dealing, however, with Israel rather than the world, with questions of ritual and morals rather than of life and destiny. Like the preceding Psalm, it is original and vigorous in style, but this is marked by a stately sublimity of its own, which stamps it as belonging to the golden age of the nation. God is represented as coming to judgement, arraigning His people before Him that He may investigate the nature of their worship and service and set them in the right way. Especially is the subject of sacrifice set in its true light, as it appears in the searching glance of the Divine eye. The sacrifice of animals is not condemned nor slighted, but such sacrifices as many had been in the habit of offering are shown to be utterly unworthy of Him to whom they were presented, and of the spiritual worship which ought to characterize the true Israel. The moral and spiritual significance of ritual, and the absolute necessity of ordering the life and conduct of the worshippers in accordance with the character of a holy God, are insisted upon with the fervour and power characteristic of the true prophet.

The Psalm is ascribed to Asaph. The subject of Asaphic Psalms is more fully dealt with in the Introduction to Book III, but here it may be said that the title does not in any sense determine the date. Some of the Psalms which bear Asaph's name cannot have been written by the musician who figured in David's history, 1 Chron. xv. 16–19; probably none of them were so written. The phrase **of Asaph** is to be understood in the same way as 'of the sons of Korah,' to indicate a collection of Psalms bearing a name which was probably that of a musical guild. Internal evidence would mark out this Psalm as belonging to the eighth or the seventh century B. C., either to the time of Hosea and Micah or to the reformation of Josiah, more probably the former.

The Psalm easily divides itself into four parts: introduction, 1–6; the true nature of sacrifice, 7–15; denunciation of immorality, 16–21; conclusion, 22, 23.

1. God who appears in majesty for judgement is described here by three names, 'El, Elohim, Yahweh.' The words '*Elyon* and *Eloah* also occur in verses 14 and 22. The subject of the names of God is dealt with in a detached note, p. 358, and in the Introduction to vol. ii. The three names here united are not often thus found together, but see Joshua xxii. 22. The translation there adopted, 'The Lord, the God of gods,' is advocated by some in this verse

And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the
going down thereof.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, 2
God hath shined forth.
Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence : 3
A fire shall devour before him,
And it shall be very tempestuous round about him.
He shall call to the heavens above, 4
And to the earth, that he may judge his people :
Gather my saints together unto me ; 5
Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.
And the heavens shall declare his righteousness ; 6

(R. V. marg.). Following the text, however, we have three names, of which two are easily distinguished. *Yahweh* is the God of special revelation to Israel, God of the sacred covenant, while both *El* and *Elohim* are general names for the Deity who rules the world. The conjunction of names of course identifies these two. The combination of sacred titles gives great dignity to the exordium, and the keynote of the Psalm is struck at the outset, that Israel's God is indeed the Judge of the whole earth.

2. Zion is God's dwelling-place, but the Psalm describes a special Epiphany, an unusual raying forth of his splendour. Compare 'shine forth' in another Asaphic Psalm, lxxx. 1.

3. The idea intended is better conveyed by present tenses, 'our God cometh,' 'a fire devoureth,' &c. (R. V. marg.). The change of tense in Hebrew gives a vividness to the picture, best reproduced in English by the use of the historic present. A storm attends a theophany, as in Ps. xviii and Hab. iii.

4. Heaven and earth are assessors in this great assize, as in the dramatic apostrophe of Micah, 'Let the hills hear thy voice. Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy,' vi. 1, 2.

5. It is only the elect people who are to be judged, though earth and skies are witnesses. Those who have received special privileges must render special account. **Saints** is explained by the second line of the verse, those who have entered into a special engagement with Jehovah, as He with them, who should therefore recognize the special obligations of this bond of love.

The covenant was made **by** (*lit.* 'upon') **sacrifice,** the sprinkling of blood sealing the solemn promise made, 'All that the Lord hath spoken will we do,' Exod. xxiv. 7.

6. Render, 'And the heavens declare . . . For God, He is Judge.'

For God is judge himself. [Selah
7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak;
O Israel, and I will testify unto thee:
I am God, *even* thy God.
8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices;
And thy burnt offerings are continually before me.
9 I will take no bullock out of thy house,
Nor he-goats out of thy folds.
10 For every beast of the forest is mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
11 I know all the fowls of the mountains:

All this is introductory only, but the full painting in of so august a background is intended to heighten the solemnity of the indictment about to be preferred.

7. The word 'trial' hardly conveys a true idea of the scene. God's 'controversy' with His people is the solemn protest of One who has a right to punish disobedience without a word, but who condescends to register a complaint which must be accounted reasonable as soon as stated. Hence **testify unto** might be rendered 'witness against thee'; the charge to be made only needs to be uttered for its righteousness to be seen and recognized. Israel must acknowledge the claim of Him who is not only **God,** but **thy God.**

8. No complaint is made concerning the due observance of ritual. This has been fully attended to; we need not say too fully, as if **continually** implied something of the weariness of multitudinous sacrifices described in Isa. i. 11. Still, the error, since error there appears to be, does not lie in a failure to observe the outward ordinances.

9-11. The fatal deficiency lies in the failure to understand the meaning of sacrifice. With penetrating irony the prophet brings home to the formalist, who prides himself on the exactness of his ritual performances, the absurdity of supposing that the Creator of heaven and earth cares to receive a few goats or sheep, or that He is anxious about a few cattle more or less, or would miss a meal if an Israelite failed to render in detail some offering prescribed by law or custom.

'The cattle upon the mountains of a thousand' may mean the mountains 'where thousands of cattle live' (R. V. marg.), but the text probably gives the idea correctly. The Hebrew construction, however, is awkward, and Cheyne, following Olshausen, adopts

And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: 12
For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.
Will I eat the flesh of bulls, 13
Or drink the blood of goats?
Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; 14
And pay thy vows unto the Most High:
And call upon me in the day of trouble; 15
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

But unto the wicked God saith, 16

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the reading 'mountains of God.' This is smoother and less significant. The latter part of verse 11 runs literally, 'Whatever moveth in the field is with me,' before my eye, in my possession, subjects of my thought, objects of my care.

12, 13. The idea that the god literally partook of the meat offered in sacrifice upon his altar prevailed in early Semitic religions, as in the lower type of religions it prevails still. Israel may have been in danger of interpreting too literally the current language concerning sacrifice, compare Lev. xxi. 8, 17, &c., 'the bread of thy God.' This does not follow, however, from the indignant irony of these verses. It is enough that the prophet should thus indicate the absurdity of the notion that these multiplied sacrifices were necessary to God, as if in any sense He fed upon them or would lack sustenance without them.

14, 15. What God desires is a grateful heart and an obedient life. A man who offers this pure and spiritual sacrifice may pray with the assurance that he will be heard and helped.

Did the Psalmist intend to disparage material sacrifice altogether? This is not implied. Cheyne, in his note on this verse, says that neither prophets nor wise men regarded animal sacrifices 'as ideally good. The spiritual meaning of the sacrificial system cannot have been recognized by them.' But this must not be considered as proved. The controversy thus raised, e. g. over Jer. vii. 22, is too large to be entered on in a note, but the Psalmist at least does not set aside as useless or evil the practice of offering animal sacrifice, while undoubtedly, like Isaiah, Hosea and Micah, he emphasizes the importance of spiritual worship.

16. The second part of the indictment on which we now enter shows the reason of the first. There was great danger of what was worse than formalism, downright hypocrisy. To substitute outward ritual for inward allegiance is bad enough, but a man

What hast thou to do to declare my statutes,
And that thou hast taken my covenant in thy mouth?
17 Seeing thou hatest instruction,
And castest my words behind thee.
18 When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with him,
And hast been partaker with adulterers.
19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil,
And thy tongue frameth deceit.
20 Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother;
Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
21 These things hast thou done, and I kept silence;
Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself:
But I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.

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seldom stops with this. When he has backslidden in heart, it will not be long before he backslides in life. Israel had largely done so. Whilst rehearsing God's statutes and repeating the words of the covenant which bound the people to obedience, many of them were violating some of the most fundamental precepts of morality. This deserves and receives stern denunciation.

17. A man has no right to take the solemn words of precept as his professed guide, if all the time he practically gets rid of them and hates the correction or moral discipline which is intended to train him to obedience.

18-20. Theft, adultery, falsehood, even where close kinship might have been supposed to restrain the lying tongue—these are no slight faults. In the former two cases, it is not the commission of crime that is directly charged, but pleasure in the company of the dishonest and impure implies a partaking in their sins. Treachery and meanness are marks of social degeneracy and disintegration. No community can long hold together where malice and falsehood are eating out the heart of friendship and family affection; but for an Israelite, with the solemn covenant of his nation upon his lips, thus to prove himself traitor and blasphemer!

21. One further evil had been committed. Because God did not at once punish these offences, the very fount of religious life had become tainted. The evildoer should have understood and profited by God's forbearance, but instead he dared to blaspheme

Now consider this, ye that forget God, 22
Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to
deliver:
Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth 23
me;
And to him that ordereth his conversation *aright*
Will I shew the salvation of God.

God, to regard Him as like himself, to degrade his very religion, and imagine that such a sinner could still be a *chasid*, a saint, a man with his name in the covenant-grant, while false to its fundamental character. This frightful tendency has prevailed in other generations, Eccles. viii. 11.

God is not mocked. At least by His servant He will expose the evil, lay bare the mischief, and set these gross offences **in order**, i. e. carefully specified and drawn up as in a formal indictment, before the eyes of the offender. If after this he deceives himself, the greater will be his condemnation.

22. Reformation is urged. And this on two grounds: the first, the danger of severe and final punishment; the second, the blessedness of offering acceptable service. Sinners on the one hand are warned that God will not always forbear, that men must not presume upon His 'slackness.'

23. On the other hand, in a fine conclusion, the Psalmist declares the true principles of religion in all ages. In worship what is needed is a thankful heart, and for the obtaining of salvation a faithful and devoted life. From Samuel to James (1 Sam. xv. 22; Jas. i. 27), as well as before the time of the O. T. prophet and the N. T. apostle, God's messengers have taught that the ritual with which He is well pleased is the service of the heart.

'Its faith and hope Thy canticles,
And its obedience praise!'

The fact that in the second line of this verse the word 'aright' has to be supplied has led to variations of rendering, and it has been proposed to alter the text to 'him that is perfect in his way.' But the simple translation of simple words is enough, **And to him that ordereth** (*or* 'prepareth), his way, without specifying how. It was the 'way,' i. e. the conduct, the actual steps taken in life, that was wrong, and no one who listened to the searching words of this faithful servant of God but knew how to prepare his way in future.

51 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David: when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness:

PSALM LI. A PENITENT'S PRAYER.

This Psalm is sacred in the long annals of human sorrow for sin and desire for pardon and cleansing. The tradition of more than two thousand years has indissolubly associated it with the name of David, his 'bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,' his dark transgression and whole-souled repentance. How should it be read to-day, and what light does external or internal evidence shed upon the meaning and history of one of the deepest utterances of O. T. religion?

The Psalm before us forms the first in a small 'Davidic' collection, embodied by the Elohistic editor in what is now described as Book II. This group extends to the end of Ps. lxx, only lxvi and lxvii being without the title 'of David.' Eight out of the number are assigned in the titles to some special period in David's history. Now it must be seen at once that it is quite impossible to accept these titles literally; to suppose, e. g., that such verses as li. 18, 19 and liii. 6 were written in David's time, or that other passages, quite unsuited to his position, either as fugitive or as king, came from David's pen. It remains possible, however, that this group contains a nucleus of early compositions, modified in the course of centuries and expressly prepared for public worship in a later age. An alternative view assumes that a later poet sought to describe appropriately, as he thought, some of the circumstances of David's life, to aid the faith and piety of a later generation. But a large number of modern critics simply regard the titles as erroneous, attached in error to post-Exilic compositions by editors who misunderstood the traditional phrase 'of David' to imply Davidic authorship. The probability of these several hypotheses will be discussed in detail in the Introduction and notes to each Psalm.

In the present case, can the title be defended? If verses 18 and 19 formed a part of the original Psalm, certainly not, for none of the attempts to explain away the obvious meaning of 'Build thou the walls of Jerusalem' is satisfactory. It is, however, probable on many grounds that these verses constitute a liturgical addition to a distinctly personal and spiritual Psalm which might appear to disparage the sacrificial system.

Is the main portion of the Psalm appropriate in David's lips? The often raised objection that verse 4 ignores the gravity of his offence on the human side has been often refuted. A sinner in

According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out
my transgressions.

the presence of the Most Holy God views himself and his sin for the moment in that searching light alone. As Paul could not be accounted chief of sinners in human estimation, so the words 'against thee only have I sinned' do not necessarily imply that nothing in the offences acknowledged affected the penitent's fellow men. Of what kind of transgression is such language strictly and utterly true?

Still, it must be questioned whether the general tone of penitence is that of David's day. We are not prepared to say with Cheyne, 'David could not have had these ideas,' but it is certainly true to say that both the thoughts and the language of the Psalm harmonize better with the period of the second Isaiah. The phrase 'thy holy spirit' in verse 11 in our opinion points unquestionably to a comparatively late epoch.

Modern critics who adopt a late date for the Psalm strongly advocate a national rather than a personal application of the words. The best statement of this position is that of Robertson Smith, who contends that this is 'a Psalm of the true Israel of the Exile in the mouth of a prophet, perhaps of the very prophet who wrote the last chapters of the Book of Isaiah[1].' He argues that 'blood-guiltiness' in verse 14 does not mean murder but mortal sin, and pleads that the words throughout fitly represent the spiritual experience of Israel. The whole question of the 'I' of the Psalms is discussed in the Introduction to vol. ii, but here it may be said that surely verses 5 and 6 must be personal, and that the deepest significance of the whole utterance is lost if the personal element is excluded. That the individual Jew often spoke representatively, and often thought of the community to which he belonged even in his confessions of sin, is of course not only possible but an unquestionable and instructive fact.

On the whole question of authorship it must be said that it cannot be *proved* that David wrote any part of this Psalm, and that probabilities are against the supposition, but that still it may be read as in past ages with David's sin and penitence in mind as a palmary illustration of a great heart greatly sinning and greatly repenting. It has for long been reckoned in the Christian Church as the fourth of the Penitential Psalms.

It may be divided into four parts: verses 1-4, a general confession; 5-12, more minute acknowledgement and earnest prayer for pardon; 13-17, an anticipation of the blessings of renewal, with 18 and 19 as a conclusion added later.

1. The Psalmist is confessing his sins, not his crimes. Hence

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[1] *Old Testament in the Jewish Church,* second Edition, Note E, p. 440.

2 Wash me throughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I acknowledge my transgressions:
And my sin is ever before me.
4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight:
That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest.

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he casts himself on the Divine grace as the only power which can set him right. He prays 'Be gracious unto me,' and rests his plea upon (1) the bond of covenant **lovingkindness** between God and His people, and (2) the 'abundant compassions' which belong to the Divine character. See Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

2. In the former verse the plural, in this verse the singular number is employed to describe sin. Acts of departure from the law of God may be manifold, the root-evil is one. It is here described by two words, of which **iniquity** denotes rather the human aspect of evil as perverseness, distortion, while **sin** indicates a failure, as in God's sight, to reach the true end of man.

Of the three words used for pardon, viz. **blot out, wash,** and **cleanse,** the first is used of the wiping away of debt, the second of the washing of clothes from deeply ingrained filth by kneading, and the third of declaring clean from leprosy. It would probably be a mistake to press the etymological meaning in the many cases where these words are metaphorically used. The significance of the combination lies in this, that the Psalmist employs a variety of words both for sin and for forgiveness, to show the depth of his penitence and his earnest desire for pardon.

3. The literal rendering 'For I know' expresses the meaning better than **I acknowledge.** The Psalmist does not ask for forgiveness on the ground that he is now confessing his sin, but explains his plea for mercy by saying how conscious he is of the heinousness of his offence and that he cannot banish the thought of it from his mind.

4. Now the confession begins. The emphasis still lies upon the Psalmist's relation to God; it is the evil of his action 'in the sight of Jehovah' (2 Sam. xi. 27 and xii. 9) which now chiefly impresses him. He makes this confession in order that it may be made perfectly clear that God is justified in pronouncing sentence of condemnation. The grace for which the Psalmist asks can only be granted on these terms. Paul's quotation in Rom. iii. 4 follows the LXX in phraseology, but is perfectly true to the meaning of the original.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; 5
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: 6
And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know
wisdom.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: 7
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness; 8
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
Hide thy face from my sins, 9
And blot out all mine iniquities.

5, 6. The confession becomes still more complete and thorough. Not only are the actions in themselves wrong and the sinful inclinations which led to them, but the evil goes deeper into the nature, which is represented as having been infected even from birth. This is not alleged in palliation of the offence, but rather as showing greater need for forgiveness and cleansing. Nothing but inward holiness will suffice for a holy God. **Truth** and **wisdom** are characteristic words in the O. T., used especially in the later period as synonyms for righteousness. Knowledge of the right, and sincere desire and effort to perform it, may be described by any of these three words. It is better to read the last line as a prayer, 'Therefore make me to know wisdom in the inner chamber of my heart.'

7. hyssop: mentioned in Exod. xii. 22 in connexion with the passover, and in Num. xix. 6 and Heb. ix. 19 in reference to the cleansing of the leper, was apparently a kind of wild marjoram with an aromatic flavour, possessing 'straight, slender, leafy stalks with small heads,' growing so that a bunch could readily be broken off and used for sprinkling. Ceremonial purification, therefore, is associated with the word **purge,** while **wash** has reference to the removal of actual defilement of the clothing or the person.

whiter than snow: see Isa. i. 18; it is impossible to say whether Psalmist or prophet—if either—is the borrower here and elsewhere in the Psalm, where parallel expressions are found.

8. 'Breaking of the bones' is used metaphorically in Pss. xxxii. 3 and xlii. 10 of a deep dejection and grief which as it were shatters the whole frame. In this case it is produced by a guilty conscience, i. e. under the hand of God.

9. The usual phrase for forgiveness implies that sin should be 'covered' in God's sight; here He is represented as averting His

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.
11 Cast me not away from thy presence;
And take not thy holy spirit from me.
12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation:
And uphold me with a free spirit.
13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.

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face that He may not see it. Both expressions are, of course, anthropomorphic.

10. This and the two following verses contain six prayers, all marked by a spiritual and evangelical, or, as it may be called, a New Testament character. This tone, only paralleled in the Old Testament in the second Isaiah, and to a less degree in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, is one of the strongest arguments against Davidic authorship.

Render, 'Create for me' (R. V. marg.), and instead of 'right,' 'a steadfast spirit.' An entirely new heart is intended, not restoration to a former condition. The Psalmist recognizes that only a clean heart thus created afresh by Divine power can be constant under the assaults of temptation.

11. A heart thus cleansed must be kept clean by the sense of God's presence. Defilement and inconstancy alienate from God; a man who walks in the light of His countenance is preserved from sin. The **holy spirit** of God is mentioned only here and in Isa. lxiii. 10, 11. The phrase prepares the way for N. T. teaching, but it indicates here not a Divine Person, an interior distinction in the Deity, but a Divine influence resting upon man.

12. The prayers of this verse describe the results which will follow from answers to those which precede. These are joy, such as those who live in the Divine presence experience, because they have ever a Defender and Saviour (Ps. v. 11), and 'a willing spirit,' one whose inward impulses are so renewed that spontaneously and eagerly it moves in the right way. The word is used of freewill offerings, Exod. xxxv. 5, and of 'nobles' or 'princes' in Ps. xlvii. 9; Prov. xxv. 7. The LXX follows the latter meaning. An illuminative parallel is Isa. xxxii. 5, where the connexion between nobility and liberality is brought out. Compare Keble's 'princely heart of innocence.'

13. The first manifestation of a changed heart is readiness to testify and persuade other transgressors to turn to the right way. The language is intelligible in the mouth of David, though it is much more appropriate as coming from one of the later prophets.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; 14
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
O Lord, open thou my lips; 15
And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: 16
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: 17
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: 18

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14. On the other hand, the phrase **bloodguiltiness,** *lit.* 'blood' (plural), is most naturally understood of one who had the sin of murder, directly or indirectly, upon his head. 'A man of bloods,' Ps. v. 7, is a murderer. It is doubtless used of the nation in such passages as Isa. i. 15; Ezek. vii. 23, and it *might* mean here the consequences of mortal sin, but it would apply most appropriately to a conscience burdened with such a crime as David's murderous exposure of Uriah in battle.

thy righteousness. Forgiveness is not viewed as an infraction of the law of righteousness, but an illustration of it: since God has promised to forgive the penitent.

15. The lips had been closed from praise and all acts of worship by alienation of heart and aberration of life. The penitent contemplates with joy the prospect of being restored to the congregation of God's true Israel.

16. Render, 'That I should give it' (R.V. marg.). The language used here concerning sacrifice corresponds with that of Pss. xl. 6 and l. 8. Only a comparative disregard of outward sacrifices is intended; the penitent is conscious that the blood of bulls and of goats will not cleanse his sins or serve for thank-offering.

17. Thanksgiving is the acceptable sacrifice of Ps. l. 14, 23; the mention of contrition here shows that the Psalmist is thinking rather of initial approach to God than of acknowledgement and service after forgiveness.

18, 19. If these verses form, as seems most likely, a liturgical addition, it would seem that they are partly intended to correct the impression left by 16 and 17, still shared by many, that God required only spiritual sacrifices. The priest tones down the

Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
19 Then shalt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness,
in burnt offering and whole burnt offering:
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

52 For the Chief Musician. Maschil of David: when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

1 Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?

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strong language of the prophet. The view of Ewald and others, dating indeed from Theodoret, which makes the whole Psalm an utterance of the period of the Exile, interprets 16 and 17 of the impossibility of offering sacrifices in captivity, while 18 and 19 contain a vow to renew these when Jerusalem is restored from her desolation.

Build thou the walls of Jerusalem must be understood in the light of Ps. cxlvii. 2; even Delitzsch acknowledges that only by a strain can the phrase be put into David's mouth and made to refer to the wall which Solomon built, 1 Kings iii. 1.

Outward offerings may be **sacrifices of righteousness,** if presented in a right spirit. No prophetic teaching, from 1 Sam. xv. 22 onwards, was ever intended to contravene that statement. The use of two words, *'olah* = burnt-offering and *kalil* = whole burnt-offering, is poetical, to emphasize the thought; the former word lays stress on the burning, the ascending in smoke, the latter on the entire consumption of the victim. Forms of religion are still necessary, even for the most spiritual worshippers, and it is natural that if this deeply personal and highly spiritual Psalm was to be used in the temple-worship, such a recognition as these closing verses contain should be made of the significance and value of the temple sacrifices.

PSALM LII. THE OPPRESSOR'S OVERTHROW.

The evildoer so vigorously denounced in this Psalm is rich, influential, cruel and a liar. If David were its author, it would not be unnatural to think of Doeg as the 'man of mischief,' although the description does not fit in detail. Doeg was hardly a mighty man, though he was 'chief herdman,' and see 1 Sam. xxi. 7. marg.; he did not tell lies, though he did give information concerning David's movements; he could not be said to 'trust in riches'; and the Psalm contains no allusion to his slaughter of the priests (1 Sam. xxii. 18). Hengstenberg, in maintaining the Davidic authorship, thinks that Saul is the person addressed in the

The mercy of God *endureth* continually.
Thy tongue deviseth very wickedness; 2
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
Thou lovest evil more than good; 3
And lying rather than to speak righteousness. [Selah
Thou lovest all devouring words, 4

Psalm. It is much more probable that the Psalm belongs to the period of the later Monarchy, when national wealth had increased and there was a tendency to concentrate it in few hands, when the poorer classes were oppressed, as described by Amos and Micah, and all kinds of unscrupulous methods were employed to crush and to plunder in the name of justice. See Amos v. 11, viii. 6; Micah ii. 2, vii. 3. This passionate cry of a humble saint is much more suitably placed amidst such conditions than in the lips of David denouncing Doeg. There is no need to bring it, as do Cheyne and others, down so late as the Persian period; nor can it be said to be 'animated by a strong Church-sentiment.' The use of the term 'saints,' as in the last verse, is not confined to the Maccabaean and pre-Maccabaean periods.

The first half of the Psalm, 1-5, contains a denunciation of a prominent oppressor; the latter, 6-9, draws in favourable contrast a picture of the security of the righteous. For the word **Maschil** see Introd. p. 16.

1. The abrupt opening is most effective. To 'glory in evil-doing' implies a conscience hardened against all considerations of right, and an arrogant triumph in the success of injustice. **O mighty man,** perhaps better, 'Thou tyrant!' (P.B.V.). The word does not usually carry with it an evil sense, but mere might soon becomes self-confident and unjust. Such boasting is short-sighted; the lovingkindness of God' (the Strong One) is mightier, and it 'endureth all the day,' not for a passing hour.

2, 3. very wickedness: *lit.* 'destructions,' i. e. the utter ruin of the man oppressed. The clause **working deceitfully** applies not to the tongue, nor the razor, but to the man himself, 'O thou framer of deceit!' The frequent mention of lying and slander in these Psalms of the oppressed shows that the forms of justice were in a measure preserved. Unblushing violence was no doubt often committed, but the practice of fraud gave an additional bitterness to the cruelty complained of. To be robbed is hard, to be slandered is often harder to bear; the Psalmist suffered both. Compare the denunciation of unjust judges in Ps. lxxxii.

4, 5. The concentration of wrath upon the lying tongue shows that the mischief had been wrought by it rather than by brute

O thou deceitful tongue.
5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever,
He shall take thee up, and pluck thee out of thy tent,
And root thee out of the land of the living. [Selah
6 The righteous also shall see *it*, and fear,
And shall laugh at him, *saying*,
7 Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength;
But trusted in the abundance of his riches,
And strengthened himself in his wickedness.
8 But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house
of God:

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force, though doubtless the wealth and standing of the oppressor caused his word to be readily believed.

The tyrant is identified with the tongue, but the figures of verse 5 apply to the former, not to the latter. The metaphors are twofold. One is indicated by the word **destroy,** *lit.* 'break down' or smash utterly, used of cities or houses, Deut. vii. 5; 2 Kings x. 27. The other three words —'lay hold,' 'pluck up,' 'root out' —belong together. The ground of boasting is that this evil man is so securely entrenched in his position that he may do any kind of mischief with impunity; the Psalmist foretells that a mightier than he will seize him, as a man seizes coal with the tongs, or a weed in the earth, pluck him out of his place and cast him away **for ever.** So Jeremiah contrasts the desolate condition of the man who 'maketh flesh his arm' with the security and fruitfulness of the righteous, Jer. xvii. 5-8. So also another Psalmist anticipates the retribution that awaits the deceitful tongue, cxx. 3, 4.

6. The **fear** is caused by the suddenness and completeness of the overthrow; it implies the awe occasioned by the manifestation of Divine might. **Shall laugh,** not in the petty, malicious spirit of one who gloats over a neighbour's discomfiture, but with the joy of a man who after long discouragement sees clear proof that righteousness is stronger than unrighteousness, and that there is a God who will vindicate the cause of truth. Such confidence it is always hard to maintain under grinding oppression, and with no clear hope of a future life the righteous poor amongst the Jews must often have been tempted to despair.

7. This verse shows the ground of the triumph and the lesson to be learned from it. Compare the teaching of Ps. xlix and the phraseology of verse 6.

8. Perowne places a comma after **tree,** making the clause **in**

I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.
I will give thee thanks for ever, because thou hast done it: 9
And I will wait on thy name, for it is good, in the presence
of thy saints.

For the Chief Musician; set to Mahalath. Maschil of David. 53

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. 1
Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity;

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the house of God to describe the position and security of the speaker. In any case the olive tree cannot be in the house; it is not a case of growing 'in the courts of the house,' as in Ps. xcii. 13. The Psalmist means two things: he is flourishing whilst his rich oppressor is desolate; he is at home, happy and safe, whilst the other, whose position seemed impregnable, is an exile and wanderer. The 'lovingkindness of God' is the best safeguard **for ever and ever.**

9. Hence, thanksgiving for the past and trust for the future. **In the presence of thy saints** might seem to imply some such verb as 'I will declare' thy name; Hupfeld and others would correct the text, and Cheyne even calls the word **wait** 'senseless.' It is unusual, and a slight change would give 'I will celebrate.' The text as it stands can only mean, 'I will attend in thy house and wait for further manifestations of thy goodness.' For the word **saints,** or 'beloved ones,' see Ps. l. 9 and detached note on *chasidim* in Appendix, p. 360.

PSALM LIII. A LATER VERSION OF PSALM XIV.

For an exposition of the substance of the Psalm, see Ps. xiv. Here it need only be noted that the name Elohim is found instead of Yahweh, as elsewhere in this Book, and that the minor variations of the text raise an interesting question. Are the texts of both Psalms as we have them derived from a common original? Or does this Psalm represent a deliberately modified recension of xiv, adapted to the circumstances of a later time? The question can hardly be settled with our present data, but the latter seems to be the more probable supposition. The similarity between the letters in Ps. xiv. 5, 6 and verse 5 of this Psalm has been thought to point to conjectural emendation on the part of the editor who included the Psalm in Book II, but the whole facts are best accounted for on the hypothesis of a second recension intended for the new circumstances of a later period. The modifications are slight, but noteworthy.

1. This version as compared with xiv. 1 adds **and,** and reads

There is none that doeth good.
2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there were any that did understand,
That did seek after God.
3 Every one of them is gone back; they are together become filthy;
There is none that doeth good, no, not one.
4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And call not upon God.
5 There were they in great fear, where no fear was:
For God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee;
Thou hast put them to shame, because God hath rejected them.
6 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!
When God bringeth back the captivity of his people,
Then shall Jacob rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

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iniquity for 'works.' Both changes mark a later hand: the earlier form is the simpler and stronger.

3. gone back instead of 'gone aside'; a slight and unimportant change of word.

4. 'All' is omitted before **workers of iniquity,** as in xiv. 4.

5. Here considerable changes occur. The clause **where no fear was** is added, and two strong phrases are found instead of the tamer text of xiv. 5, 6: **God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee**; and **God hath rejected them.** These alterations, which still preserve much of the sound of the original, might easily be accounted for if it was desired to adapt the Psalm for use on the occasion of some great deliverance, like the overthrow of Sennacherib's army. But if Ps. xiv belongs to the time of Manasseh, it would not be easy to find such an event, e. g. in the time of Jeremiah.

6. This last verse occurs in both recensions, and is not improbably a liturgical addition appended later still. For though the phraseology does not necessarily imply the Babylonish captivity, it is best understood as a post-Exilic utterance.

If the theory be adopted of one common text for the two

For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments. Maschil of **54**
David: when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not
David hide himself with us?

Save me, O God, by thy name, 1
And judge me in thy might.
Hear my prayer, O God; 2
Give ear to the words of my mouth.
For strangers are risen up against me, 3
And violent men have sought after my soul:

---

recensions—as advocated, for example, by Dr. E. G. King in his commentary—then the Psalm may well have been composed in the period Hezekiah-Manasseh, the two recensions exhibiting more or less corrupt editions of it current in the interval, both being embodied after the Exile in different collections of Psalms, with the liturgical petition added, praying for a restoration of the fortunes of Israel.

PSALM LIV. DELIVERANCE FROM PERIL.

The writer of this Psalm is in danger from godless foes. These may, or may not, have been foreigners, verse 3. Otherwise there is hardly anything in the Psalm to fix its date. The title assigns it to the incident in David's persecution by Saul, when the Ziphites informed the king that David was hiding in their 'wilderness,' a region a few miles distant from Hebron 'covered with scrub and honeycombed by caves,' G. A. Smith. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 19, xxvi. 1. The language of the Psalm contains nothing specially appropriate to that occasion, neither is there anything distinctly unsuitable, unless it be the phraseology of verse 3.

The first three verses of the Psalm describe a perilous situation, and the latter four anticipate complete deliverance. For the term **Maschil** see p. 16.

1. The **name** of God stands for His whole manifested character. The Psalmist confidently rests his plea on the Divine nature and Divine strength as revealed in history, and he claims that his righteous cause should be vindicated and the dangers which threatened him averted.

2. Accordingly he prays as to One who seems to have forgotten him, but who will not refuse to hear the cry of His servant.

3. The word translated **strangers** most frequently means those who are strange to a country, i. e. foreigners, who may be presumed to be hostile. So in Hos. vii. 9, viii. 7; Isa. i. 7, xxv. 2, 5, &c. But it may mean strange to a person, or to a family: see

They have not set God before them. [Selah
4 Behold, God is mine helper:
The Lord is of them that uphold my soul.
5 He shall requite the evil unto mine enemies:
Destroy thou them in thy truth.
6 With a freewill offering will I sacrifice unto thee:
I will give thanks unto thy name, O LORD, for it is good.
7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble;
And mine eye hath seen *my desire* upon mine enemies.

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article 'Stranger' in Hastings's *Bible Dict.* i. 623. **Violent men** (or 'fierce,' or 'terrible') are described as synonymous with wicked Israelites in Jer. xv. 21; and those who **have not set God before them** may be either inside or outside the pale of the covenant-nation. The whole description does not at all suggest such foes as the Ziphites, and it is difficult to fit the language of these verses to the situation described in the title.

The parallel passage in Ps. lxxxvi. 14 reads 'proud' instead of 'strangers,' the Hebrew words being very much alike.

4. The Lord is of (A.V. 'with') **them that uphold my soul.** The preposition used here, known as *Beth essentiae*, ascribes to God the character described by the clause following; He 'falls under the category of such and fills it by Himself alone' (Delitzsch), i.e. He is the upholder or sustainer of my soul. Cheyne translates 'the great upholder,' and compares Judges xi. 35, where he represents Jephthah as saying to his daughter, 'Thou art my greatest troubler,' but the form of speech hardly implies so much as this.

5. thy truth: i.e. the Divine fidelity to His own character, His revealed promises and the actual facts of the case, demands that these wicked men should be cut off.

6. The **freewill offering** (see Num. xv. 3) was recognized in connexion with the ordained round of sacrificial ritual. But some interpreters translate, 'With a free will I will offer sacrifice,' i.e. statutes shall become songs and duty will be all delight. Note that the name Yahweh is retained here in this Elohistic Psalm; either by a slip, or because this name was more usual in such a connexion, or most probably by way of emphasis. When the Psalmist is dwelling upon the excellence of the Divine name he clings to that covenant-title which meant so much for him and for all Israel.

7. The perfect tense **hath delivered, hath seen,** is anticipatory; it describes what will have happened when—as the Psalmist hopes, For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments. Maschil of David. **55**

Give ear to my prayer, O God; 1
And hide not thyself from my supplication.
Attend unto me, and answer me: 2

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soon—he offers his sacrifice of thanksgiving for deliverance triumphantly accomplished.

PSALM LV. PRAYER OF ONE BASELY BETRAYED.

If this Psalm be understood to be David's, it must inevitably be referred to the rebellion of Absalom and the treachery of Ahithophel, and thus verses 12–14 have been understood for centuries, from the time of the Targum onwards. But closer examination shows that a superficial resemblance to the circumstances of David covers an altogether different situation. The writer of this Psalm is not a king, not even a king under a cloud; he is in the city when he writes, and unable to escape; he lives in a condition of society unlike that of Jerusalem in David's time. He suffered from base treachery like David, but the king would not have styled Ahithophel his 'equal,' and neither the previous intercourse (verse 14) nor the mode of betrayal (verses 20, 21) corresponds with the conditions under which the former 'privy councillor' tried to mislead his sovereign. Hitzig interprets the Psalm of Jeremiah and Pashhur; while Olshausen brings the date down to the Syrian period, and refers to the story of Alcimus in 1 Macc. vii. 9–25. One can only say that these conjectures are even less probable than the traditional ascription to David.

Relinquishing the attempt to fix the exact occasion of the Psalm, we find in it a very graphic picture of a servant of God immured in a city full of anarchy and discord, assailed by cruel enemies, deserted by all his friends and especially by one who was bound to him by the most sacred ties, but had shamelessly betrayed him and sided with his foes. He longs for peace, and can find none around him, nor any outward way of escape. He turns, however, to that spiritual refuge which every good man can find in the sanctuary of his own soul and casts his burden upon Jehovah, sure of finding help in God's own time and way.

Verses 1–8 contain the Psalmist's complaint and a description of his sore need; in 9–15 he breaks out in strong denunciation of the wicked who are the cause of his trouble; while in 16–23 he takes refuge in God and in prayer, gaining confidence as he proceeds and ending with assured faith and hope.

1–3. An earnest appeal for a hearing from one whose plea is his great need. Two words describe the Psalmist's condition:

I am restless in my complaint, and moan;
3 Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the wicked;
For they cast iniquity upon me,
And in anger they persecute me.
4 My heart is sore pained within me:
And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
And horror hath overwhelmed me.
6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!
Then would I fly away, and be at rest.
7 Lo, then would I wander far off,
I would lodge in the wilderness. [Selah
8 I would haste me to a shelter
From the stormy wind and tempest.

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(1) **I am restless,** and therefore either (2) 'I must moan'—must relieve myself by pouring out broken cries; or, 'I am deeply stirred' and agitated. The ground of this trouble is the oppression of **the enemy.** These (1) slander and threaten him with **the voice;** (2) **cast iniquity** upon him, either in the sense of heaping curses, or, more probably, piling up one wicked device after another against him; and (3) make their anger felt in direct 'persecution.'

4, 5. His life is more than threatened; he is passing through the very valley of the shadow of death. Pain and fear are succeeded by **horror**—a rare word, see its use in Ezek. vii. 18. This deeper shadow **hath overwhelmed** the sufferer, or 'wraps him round' like an icy pall. Compare the description culminating in 'horror' in Isa. xxi. 3, 4.

6-8. He would fain escape, but clearly cannot, since he longs for a bird's wings to carry him far from the strifes of men. The **dove** mentioned here is the wild rock-dove—the original stock from which tamer varieties of turtle-dove and pigeon are derived—which builds in the steep cliffs overlooking the wadys, always far from the abodes of men. Compare 'the covert of the steep place' as the home of the dove in Cant. ii. 14. It is capable of both swift and long flights. The 'lodge in the wilderness' would furnish him with the two things he most desires—solitude and security. The 'storm' from which he seeks to escape is, of course, the turmoil of angry and violent men, verses 9-11.

Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongue: 9
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: 10
Iniquity also and mischief are in the midst of it.
Wickedness is in the midst thereof: 11
Oppression and guile depart not from her streets.
For it was not an enemy that reproached me; 12
Then I could have borne it:
Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me;
Then I would have hid myself from him:
But it was thou, a man mine equal, 13
My companion, and my familiar friend.

9-11. The thought of these prompts him to sudden wrath. But the vehement prayer which bursts from the Psalmist's lips is not that the men themselves should be destroyed, but rather that their machinations may be overthrown. 'Bring them to nought, O Lord, and confuse their tongues,' perhaps with an allusion to Babel (Gen. xi. 5). Their devices are characterized by (1) **violence** and **strife,** verse 9; (2) **iniquity** and **mischief,** verse 10; (3) **wickedness,** fraud, and **guile,** verse 11. When such dire and ominous shapes stalk about the city, what can the good citizen desire but that they should be speedily and entirely banished? When such a tower is being built to defy high heaven, what better can happen than that the tongues of the builders should be confounded and their pretentious structure brought to nought?

12. The rapid transition from the singular to the plural, or the plural to the singular, in the Psalmist's denunciation of his enemies meets us often. It may be sometimes a form of speech only, the many being represented as one, or the one viewed as leading many others in his train. Sometimes, however—as in this case—the language is so strong and personal that it is quite clear the Psalmist has an individual foe in mind whose aggravated treachery makes him forget all others in comparison.

The tenses here should be rendered as presents: 'For it is not an enemy that revileth me; that I could bear: neither is it one who hateth, &c. . . . But—thou!'

13, 14. This false friend was an **equal** in rank and position, *lit.* one according to my price or valuation; and what was more, a **companion** or associate; further still, an intimate **friend**; and,

14 We took sweet counsel together,
We walked in the house of God with the throng.
15 Let death come suddenly upon them,
Let them go down alive into the pit:
For wickedness is in their dwelling, in the midst of them.
16 As for me, I will call upon God;
And the LORD shall save me.
17 Evening, and morning, and at noonday, will I complain,
and moan:
And he shall hear my voice.
18 He hath redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that
was against me:

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closest and most tender bond of all, one who had worshipped with the Psalmist and shared his confidence in spiritual experiences, admitted to the inmost and most sacred chambers of his heart. That such a man should not only betray a personal friend, but join the company of the wicked and taunt and slander the loyal follower of Jehovah, seemed assuredly the most cruel outrage of all, and this awakens the Psalmist's fierce and just indignation.

15. The plural recurs: 'thou' becomes **them.** The imprecation is levelled against all the caitiff crew of whom this man is but one egregious specimen. All are false to God and truth, and the Old Testament saint ruthlessly prays that, like Korah and his companions, they may be swallowed up alive, be suddenly destroyed and that without remedy. Such sudden and complete destruction is desired, not in a spirit of cruelty, but as an assured mark of Divine visitation.

16. Another abrupt transition; the storm which sprang up suddenly in verse 9 subsides as suddenly. The Psalmist withdraws into the sanctuary, the pavilion in which God hides His own servants from the strife of tongues. The name Yahweh is used, as well as the characteristic Elohim which prevails in Book II. See liv. 6.

17. Evening, and morning, for the Jewish day begins with sunset; 'at noon,' as representing all that lies between morning and evening. The Psalmist will reiterate his prayer, for his enemies repeat their attacks; he will pray continually, for his peril is incessant.

18. The last clause of the last verse, 'Then he heareth my voice,' and the tense in this, 'He hath delivered,' both represent

For they were many *that strove* with me.
God shall hear, and answer them, 19
Even he that abideth of old, [Selah
The men who have no changes,
And who fear not God.
He hath put forth his hands against such as were at peace with him: 20
He hath profaned his covenant.

---

that as accomplished which the Psalmist only anticipates in the assurance of faith. 'He shall assuredly set free my soul that they come not nigh me, for they are many that strive against me' would give the idea better to an English reader.

19. In the former part of this verse, 'afflict' (marg.) is better than R. V. text, **answer.** The latter must mean, requite them according to that which God knows to be their character. The second line should run, 'Even he that sitteth King from of old.'

The latter part of the verse is difficult. The **Selah** seems misplaced, and many critics would alter the text; Cheyne considers this and the following verses to form a fragment of another Psalm.

Taking the text as it stands, and following the improved punctuation of R. V., what are we to understand by **changes?** Either (1) the moral change of reformation—but the word does not properly mean this, and the singular would surely have been used; or (2) vicissitudes, changes of fortune, for lack of which these men are at ease and godless—but the word is not elsewhere found in this sense; or (3) relief, as a watchman or patrol is relieved at intervals from mounting guard—these men go on uninterruptedly in their wickedness. Of these alternative meanings the last is the best, but it must be allowed that no one is free from objection, and the text is probably corrupt.

A slight change would enable us to render, 'Men who have no faithfulness,' who do not know the meaning of good faith—which fits the context exactly. Of various emendations suggested, this is the easiest and most satisfactory.

20. The transition here is somewhat awkward, and it has been proposed to place this verse after 14 (Hupfeld). If smoothness of construction be the determining consideration, doubtless the connexion of thought is thus made much easier. But there is significance and force in the very wanderings and alternations of the Psalmist's thoughts, as he passes without warning from the thought of his own nest in the rock to a prayer for his enemies'

21 His mouth was smooth as butter,
But his heart was war:
His words were softer than oil,
Yet were they drawn swords.
22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee:
He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.
23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction:
Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;
But I will trust in thee.

---

destruction (verse 9), or from the fierce indignation which would devour them alive to his own quiet waiting for Jehovah (verse 16). And as in verse 15 he passes from the single traitor to the many foes, so here he turns from the godlessness of the many back to the base treachery of the one chief offender.

covenant: i. e. with man, but such desecration of friendship may well be spoken of in religious terms as an offence against all natural piety.

21. The translation of R. V. is much more vigorous than A. V., and truer to the original. The Hebrew says **his heart was war,** as in Ps. cix. 4 we read 'I am prayer.'

22. Another rapid transition, introducing the last stanza. The words **Cast thy burden** may be understood as spoken to the Psalmist, or of the Psalmist as addressing himself; if he, as in some other cases (xxxiv. 3, 4, 11, &c.), is giving advice to others, the change of note is very marked.

burden well conveys the general meaning here, though it is hardly an accurate translation. The LXX renders 'care'; but 'lot' or 'condition' gives the sense of the word better. A similar meaning is reached by understanding it not as a noun but as part of a verb, see R. V. marg., 'that which he hath given thee.' Compare the distinction between the two words for 'burden' in Gal. vi. 2, 5. This is the latter kind of burden, which every man must carry for himself, and it is not said that God will relieve the bearer of his load, but that He will sustain him under its weight.

23. After so gracious a promise, precious to N. T. believers as well as to O. T. saints, comes an anticipation of vengeance from which the disciples of Christ shrink. The Psalmist's words, however, fairly correspond to the Christian anticipation of righteous

For the Chief Musician; set to Jonath elem rehokim. *A Psalm* 56
of David: Michtam: when the Philistines took him in Gath.

Be merciful unto me, O God; for man would swallow me 1
up:

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retribution at the day of judgement. The life of 'men of blood' shall be cut short, he says, as a token that God is against them and will visit them with a kind of punishment which will make manifest the fact. See Prov. x. 27.

The closing words only exhibit the other side of the same shield. Just as he who trusts in Jehovah is safe, so he who defies Jehovah must be made to suffer, and be seen and known to suffer, and that not by 'the common death of all men,' or 'the visitation of all men,' Num. x. 29. So Jeremiah says 'he that getteth riches, and not by right; in the midst of his days they shall leave him, and at his end he shall be a fool,' xvii. 11. 'But as for me, I take refuge in thee.'

PSALM LVI. FAITH VICTORIOUS OVER FEAR.

This and the following Psalm form companion pictures. In style, in structure, and in theme they are similar, and have been esteemed by good judges as amongst the most beautiful in the Psalter. They both belong to a 'Davidic' collection, and this one is assigned in the title to the period of Saul's persecution when David took refuge with the Philistines in Gath, esteeming himself safer with the hereditary foes of Israel than with the king who ought to have been his friend and protector. The phrase of the title, 'When the Philistines took him in Gath,' appears to be inconsistent with the statement of the history that David 'fled' and went unto 'the king of Gath.' There is no necessary discrepancy, as it is clear that when David's identity was discovered he was obliged to feign madness, and he must have been more or less of a prisoner. Still, as in Ps. xxxiv, which is referred to the same period, the substitution of 'Abimelech' for Achish awakens some suspicion, so the phraseology of this title suggests a comparatively late date and a lack of complete acquaintance with the history. Modern critics refer the Psalm to the period of Jeremiah or later. The fact that the Targum contains a preface describing the Psalm as one 'concerning the congregation of Israel' shows that in very early times different views of the Psalms prevailed, and the same words are applied, now to David in Gath, now to the nation oppressed by its enemies. Thus variously have these sacred lyrics been understood and used in all ages, and whilst the probabilities are decidedly against the Davidic authorship of this Psalm, there is nothing in its contents inconsistent with his experiences as, time

All the day long he fighting oppresseth me.
2 Mine enemies would swallow me up all the day long:
For they be many that fight proudly against me.
3 What time I am afraid,
I will put my trust in thee.

---

and again, either amongst Philistines in Gath or sheltering from Saul in the recesses of a cave, his faith triumphed over his natural and inevitable fears.

The words **Jonath elem rehokim** are explained in R. V. marg. The change in vocalization necessary for the translation 'The dove of the distant terebinths' is very slight, and it may be understood that this is the name of the melody to which the Psalm was sung by the choir. Both LXX and Targum give a kind of mystical interpretation of the words. The LXX renders, 'For the people far removed from the sanctuary,' and the Targum compares the nation to 'a silent dove, when they were far from their cities and turned again and praised the Lord of the world.' For the term **Michtam,** which has been translated 'an inscription,' 'an epigrammatic writing,' and 'a golden Psalm,' see Introd. p. 16, compare also Ps. xvi.

The structure of the Psalm is simple and effective. There are three stanzas, 1-4, 5-11, and 12, 13; the two former ending with a refrain, 'In God I will praise his word, I will not fear,' &c. The progress of feeling in which faith gradually wins its victory is delicately and aptly brought to a climax in words which express complete devotion to God's service.

1. Render, 'Be gracious unto me.' The contrast is drawn between God in His might and 'frail man,' for the word used carries this connotation. These human foes are formidable enough to the Psalmist. They 'gape,' like the jaws of a wild beast ready to swallow its prey, they 'contend,' they do their best to 'crush' him to the earth, such is the literal meaning of the three words found in this verse. But in the sight of God they are but feeble men.

2. Twice is the phrase repeated, **all the day long:** and this verse adds the fact that the foes are many in number and haughty in demeanour. The word rendered in A. V. 'O thou most High,' refers to the enemies, as in R. V. **proudly,** *lit.* 'from on high.' The expression shows how superior the Psalmist's adversaries were to him in position and advantages; but the balance is far more than redressed by the single phrase 'God is for me' (verse 9).

3. Kirkpatrick notes that 'David's sojourn in Gath is the only occasion on which he is recorded to have been afraid of man.' See 1 Sam. xxi. 12, though in Ps. xviii. 4 we read 'the floods of

In God I will praise his word: 4
In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid;
What can flesh do unto me?
All the day long they wrest my words: 5
All their thoughts are against me for evil.
They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, 6
They mark my steps,
Even as they have waited for my soul.

---

ungodliness made me afraid.' In this verse fear is not positively asserted, the force of the tense is that of the subjunctive mood in Latin, 'In the day, or at the time, when fear (may) assail me.' On the other hand, it is not excluded, as if the Psalmist had said 'In case I should,' or 'If it should happen that I were afraid.'

Fear and faith may co-exist, but one must conquer. Victory rests with the devout will, strengthened by earnest prayer.

4. In this verse the victory begins to be realized; prayer has preceded (verse 1), praise follows. Faith has begun to do its work, 'In God have I taken refuge,' and fear has so far been overcome that the Psalmist can say **I will not be afraid.** But he is still reasoning down the natural tremors of his lower self. A. V. represents him as having no hesitation, but the form of the question should be preserved as in R. V., **What can** (mere mortal) **flesh do unto me?**

The twice-repeated clause, **In God,** shows that whether faith is being exercised or thanksgiving offered, the strength of grace is the upholding energy. Such a phrase as this anticipates the New Testament usage of 'in Christ.'

5. Second strophe. The word 'strophe' here exactly represents the movement, for the Psalmist returns upon his own steps to his first position and travels once more along a new curve to the exultant phrase of the refrain.

5, 6. A fresh description of the perils which for the third time are described as lasting all the day long, so that the Psalmist never feels himself safe. This time fraud is more in evidence than violence. Slander is employed, plots abound, his foes are active. They scheme, they gather, they hide, they watch—all with a view to their victim's life. The successive clauses give a graphic picture of the dangers which beset a man who, like David at the court of Achish, or Jeremiah during part of his life, lived in an atmosphere of suspicion. If understood of a nation, the words must be understood metaphorically and are not so suitable, though there have been periods when the Jew as such has been similarly suspected and beset.

7 Shall they escape by iniquity?
In anger cast down the peoples, O God.
8 Thou tellest my wanderings:
Put thou my tears into thy bottle;
Are they not in thy book?
9 Then shall mine enemies turn back in the day that I call:
This I know, that God is for me.

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7. According to the present text R. V. has given the best translation, **by iniquity,** meaning 'in their iniquity, gross as it is.' Is it to be thought that iniquity, just because it is high-handed, shall bring them off scathless? A very slight change in a letter would give the meaning 'Requite them according to their iniquity,' a much easier reading, grammatically and every way.

Note R. V. **peoples:** one of many cases in which A. V. 'people' is altogether misleading. The Psalmist anticipates the judgement of the God of the whole earth on the nations outside Israel, and this fact is not favourable to the theory of Davidic authorship.

8. my wanderings. A pathetic touch, whether the reader thinks of David, or of Jeremiah, or of exiles in Babylon, or of the vagrant traveller in the journey of life. Alternative renderings suggested, 'inward agitation' or 'my moaning,' are both unsuitable. God counts every step and turn in the road taken by the hunted wanderer; every tear he sheds is treasured like the water in the skin-bottle, sometimes so precious that the traveller reckons up the few drops that remain; every sigh and sorrow is recorded in the book which notes all and never errs.

The Psalmist knows these things, and yet he prays that God will mark and take count of his griefs. The proposed rendering, 'My tears are put,' is tame in comparison with the text, which passes from confidence to petition and back to confidence again. The Divine **book** is spoken of chiefly as a record of those who are dear to God and cared for by Him: compare Exod. xxxii. 32, 'blot me out of thy book'; Mal. iii. 16, 17, 'a book of remembrance for them that feared Jehovah,' &c.

9. More positive assurance is expressed than has as yet been reached, faith passes into knowledge. The verse opens with an emphatic word **Then,** as if the finger pointed to the very time and place of the overthrow in question. Further, the Psalmist is able to say **This I know:** and lastly, he asserts definitely **God is for me.** R. V. marg. 'for' is perhaps to be preferred to the text, **that,** though both renderings lead to the same point in the end.

In God will I praise *his* word: 10
In the LORD will I praise *his* word.
In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid; 11
What can man do unto me?
Thy vows are upon me, O God: 12
I will render thank offerings unto thee.
For thou hast delivered my soul from death: 13
Hast thou not *delivered* my feet from falling?
That I may walk before God
In the light of the living.

10, 11. The refrain is here repeated with two slight changes. One is that the first line, **In God will I praise** his **word,** is reiterated, with the name Yahweh substituted for Elohim. Some critics attribute this change to the revision of a Yahwistic text by an Elohist editor. If it be an unintentional corruption the emphasis thus introduced is appropriate and impressive. The other variation is the substitution of **man** for 'flesh,' of course without change of meaning.

12, 13. The last stanza brings the Psalm to a close in the practical fashion characteristic of a truly devout spirit. It is written from the standpoint of deliverance already accomplished. **Thy vows** means vows made to God, obligations incurred by the Psalmist, who is ready to fulfil in his prosperity promises made in the time of his need.

Two kinds of acknowledgement are mentioned: **thank offerings,** according to R. V., which means sacrifices over and above such as the law demands—or perhaps 'thanksgivings,' and loyal obedience to God's commands in the days that are to come.

The second line of verse 13, Hast thou **not** delivered **my feet from falling?** is a question only in appearance. In reality it contains a strong affirmation; thus Delitzsch renders, 'Yea, and my feet from falling.' R. V. indicates this, while it retains the more literal translation, by placing the note of interrogation after 'falling.'

The object of the greater and the lesser deliverance which God has accomplished for the Psalmist, viz. the preservation of his life and the sustaining of the active powers of life, is that he may henceforth employ all his faculties in God's service and walk in the light of His countenance, 'till travelling days are done.'

57 For the Chief Musician; *set to* Al-tashheth. *A Psalm* of David: Michtam: when he fled from Saul, in the cave.

1 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me;
For my soul taketh refuge in thee:
Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I take refuge,
Until *these* calamities be overpast.

PSALM LVII. CONFIDENCE IN DANGER.

This Psalm should be carefully compared with the preceding. Not only are the tone and spirit of the two identical, but the occurrence of a refrain at the end of each of the two chief divisions of the Psalm is common to both, as are certain phrases repeated in both. In this instance, however, the danger is less and the confidence greater. The closing verses of Ps. lvii strike a much higher note of triumph than is reached in any part of Ps. lvi.

The inscription refers the Psalm to David, 'when he fled from Saul, in the cave.' It is not clear whether this means, as the LXX understands it, 'into the cave.' If so, the reference is probably to the cave of Adullam, a few miles from Hebron, see 1 Sam. xxii. 1. The more appropriate reference, however, would be to the well-known incident when David spared Saul's life in the cave at En-gedi, on the west of the Dead Sea, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3; but the very general language of the Psalm contains nothing decisive as to occasion or authorship. The latter verses of the Psalm are found again in Book V, as part of Ps. cviii, but as that Psalm is composite and its text inferior, we shall be safe in concluding that they are found here in their original setting.

For the meaning of **Michtam** and **Al-tashheth,** 'Destroy not,' see Introd. p. 16. The usually received conjecture is that these are the opening words of a vintage-song (see Isa. lxv. 8), to the melody of which the Psalm was to be sung.

1. Be merciful: rather, 'Be gracious.'

taketh refuge: better, 'hath taken refuge,' marking the ground of the Psalmist's claim. 'Sanctuary' will not be refused to this fugitive from persecution. Further, he who has found in God a safe hiding-place in the past resolves that he will still take shelter in the same secure refuge, described as **the shadow of thy wings.** The same figure is found some eight or ten times elsewhere in the Psalms.

Instead of **calamities** R. V. marg. gives 'wickednesses,' but the word, which means literally 'destructions,' conveys rather the idea of 'destructive storm.' Driver renders 'engulfing ruin'; P. B. V. gives the picturesque paraphrase 'until this tyranny be overpast.'

I will cry unto God Most High; 2
Unto God that performeth *all things* for me.
He shall send from heaven, and save me, 3
When he that would swallow me up reproacheth; [Selah
God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.
My soul is among lions; 4
I lie among them that are set on fire,
Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.

---

2. Three names of God are combined here: *Elohim*, the general name of Deity, characteristic of this book; *'Elyon*, Most High, the Ruler of all; and *El*, the strong God, who is described as 'He who achieveth for me'—no object to the verb being expressed. All that ought to be done, all that need be done, all that can rightly be done, God 'performs' for His servant.

3. When **he that would swallow me up reproacheth:** only two words in the Hebrew, represented by eight in English. The terseness of the expression occasions some difficulty. A.V. marg., following LXX and Jerome, makes God the subject: 'He, i.e. God, reproacheth him who would crush me,' so also Cheyne who translates 'giveth them to dishonour'—but God is not said thus to 'reproach' men. In R.V. the word 'reproacheth' has no object: either God or God's servant is to be understood. A better translation would be, 'For he who pants for my life hath blasphemed,' i.e. has blasphemously defied God, denying His ability or willingness to help, and thus rendered the clause gives briefly and parenthetically the ground of the Psalmist's assurance that God will interpose on his behalf.

The first clause of the verse, **He shall send from heaven,** is completed in the last line, and the object of the verb 'send' is supplied. Two radiant angels, Lovingkindness and Truth, are to be dispatched on a mission of deliverance, one to which God's mercy and faithfulness are equally pledged. Compare the mention of 'light and truth' in Ps. xliii. 3.

If the **Selah** in this verse implies an interval, it occurs awkwardly. In LXX it is found at the end of verse 2.

4. A difficulty arises as to the meaning of **I lie.** The part of the verb used forbids us to understand it in the sense of the simple indicative present, hence R.V. marg. gives 'I must lie.' This is not, however, the proper meaning of the 'cohortative' in Hebrew, nor does it well fit the context. Cheyne suggests the emendation, 'My soul hath dwelt,' but taking the text as it stands, we should

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let thy glory *be* above all the earth.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps;
My soul is bowed down:
They have digged a pit before me;
They are fallen into the midst thereof themselves. [Selah
7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed:
I will sing, yea, I will sing praises.
8 Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp:
I myself will awake right early.

---

agree with Delitzsch, Kirkpatrick and others who find in the clause an expression of confidence. Hence the meaning would be 'I will lie,' 'I will take my rest even among fire-breathing foes,' secure in the presence of Him who sends His angels to guard me (Ps. xxxiv. 7).

5. A noble refrain, appearing here somewhat abruptly, unless the connexion with verse 3 be closely preserved, verse 4 being understood in the sense just explained. In this ascription of praise may also perhaps be included the prayer that God would assert His majesty and 'take to Himself His great glory' in the overthrow of the above-named savage enemies.

6. Again, after the refrain, as in Ps. lvi, the Psalmist recurs to the actual situation. The perfects in the first three lines refer to past events, but in the last line **They are fallen** expresses the anticipation of faith. The Psalmist is not yet delivered, according to verses 1 and 4.

In the second line the LXX probably gives the correct meaning, 'They have bowed down my soul,' and if so this line also is anticipatory—they have spread their nets, and already see me captive and humiliated in their hands. Then the surprise of the fourth line is the more effective; instead of finding the victim in the pitfall, they lie disgraced and helpless in the midst of it themselves.

7. *Lit.* 'Firm is my heart, O God.' In li. 10 the Psalmist had prayed for a firm, a steadfast spirit; here that blessing is enjoyed. The word does not mean, as in the Vulgate and some other versions, 'ready'; preparedness results from steadfastness. Staunch in defence, courageous in attack, the heart that is **fixed** is ready for any event.

8. right early. This is not a morning hymn, however suitable

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the peoples : 9
I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.
For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, 10
And thy truth unto the skies.
Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens ; 11
Let thy glory *be* above all the earth.

For the Chief Musician ; *set to* Al-tashheth. *A Psalm* of David : Michtam. **58**

Do ye indeed in silence speak righteousness ? 1

---

for Lauds or Matins. The Psalmist simply rallies his powers for praise and active service.

my glory : i. e. my soul, myself. In the second line render, with R. V. marg., 'I will awake the dawn,' will anticipate in my thanksgiving the coming of the morn of deliverance.

For **psaltery and harp,** *nebhel* and *kinnor*, see on Ps. xxxiii. 2.

9. Again, as in lvi. 7, we find an allusion to the nations outside Israel, such as does not actually disprove Davidic authorship but is distinctly unfavourable to it.

10. Almost identical with xxxvi. 10, but particularly appropriate here after the mention of lovingkindness and truth in verse 3.

11. This refrain forms the keynote of the Psalm and of the Psalter. Whether David, or Jeremiah, or Israel, or a humbler soul be the suppliant for personal succour, every Psalmist longs for this consummation of the glory of God, and finds no spot of earth too lowly but that from it he may soar to the skies. Exalt thyself, O God, in heaven and in earth and above both : *Gloria in excelsis !*

PSALM LVIII. REBUKE OF UNJUST JUDGES.

It is clear that this Psalm is intended to denounce those who were unrighteously exercising authority and perverting justice. But the terms are not sufficiently explicit for us to be sure whether an Israelite is protesting against foreign domination, or remonstrating with judges and persons of influence in his own nation who were abusing their lawful position and offending against the covenant of Jehovah. That the Psalm cannot be referred to David appears quite certain. Baethgen and others are equally sure that it is post-Exilic, and that the indignation of the Psalmist has been aroused by the violence and injustice of Babylonians or Persians, or even oppressors of a later period. It seems to us, for reasons which will be more fully given in the notes, that the period to which the Psalm may be best referred is that of the

Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?
2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness;
Ye weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.
3 The wicked are estranged from the womb:
They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

later Monarchy. Clearer signs would be given than are here afforded that heathen oppressors are intended, were the protest against these. Psalm lxxxii, which is very similar in subject, should be carefully compared with this.

The style of the Psalm is original and forcible, here and there to the point of obscurity. It opens with a burst of indignation, verses 1 and 2; the evils complained of are specified, 3–5; and the urgent prayer or confident prophecy of verses 6–9 prepares for the anticipation of Divine judgement, 10, 11. For **Al-tashheth** and **Michtam** see p. 16.

1. in silence. The word thus translated is only found once elsewhere in O. T., viz. in the title of Ps. lvi, in a phrase itself very doubtful. A. V. translates it by the word 'congregation,' a meaning now generally acknowledged to be inadmissible. Other versions give little help, LXX, Jer. and Vulg. rendering it 'indeed,' while the Syriac omits it altogether. R. V. marg. understands the word as meaning that righteousness is 'dumb' in the mouths of these unworthy dispensers of justice. Another note in the margin gives an alternative reading, obtained by a very slight change in the vowel-points, and most modern critics accept this emendation. The verse then would run, 'Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O ye gods, *or*, O ye mighty ones? Do ye in uprightness judge the sons of men?' The term 'gods' or 'mighty ones' does not refer to angels but to the judges who in Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6 are certainly described as Elohim, with a reference to Exod. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, 9, 28. The irony implied in the use of this lofty term for judges who ought to consider their office as Divinely given, and to exercise jurisdiction as representatives of the All-Righteous, is bitter and telling.

2. We might expect this verse to begin with 'Nay'; but the thought latent in the Hebrew particle is, 'So far from doing this, you go on to work wickedness, first in plan, then in action.'

weigh out: a technical phrase for the use of the scales of justice, compare Prov. xvi. 11. Perhaps, with Baethgen and others, we should read, 'Your hands weigh out violence in the land'—that which is solemnly dispensed in your courts is the precise opposite of what it ought to be. See Isa. vii. 7.

3. The perverseness in question is traced to its roots. The

Their poison is like the poison of a serpent : 4
They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear ;
Which hearkeneth not to the voice of charmers, 5
Charming never so wisely.
Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth : 6
Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.
Let them melt away as water that runneth apace : 7
When he aimeth his arrows, let them be as though they
 were cut off.

---

evil act springs from an evil heart, one that in the very bent of its nature is estranged from God, His covenant, and His laws.

4, 5. The first of a number of striking comparisons by means of which the Psalmist graphically portrays various aspects of the evil-doing of these wicked men.

They are like the serpent in two respects : (1) the venom which they subtly instil into the veins of the body politic; (2) the peculiar callousness and obstinacy which is characteristic of one particular kind of serpent only. Most snakes yield to the arts of the charmer who has learned to control these intractable creatures by music and cries of his own. It is not clear what kind of serpent is intended here by **adder.** Probably the Egyptian cobra is intended, the 'aspic' by which Cleopatra took her own life, akin to the well-known hooded species, *Cobra di capello.* Snakes thus inaccessible to the charmer's art are mentioned in Jer. viii. 17.

6. The next comparison brings out the violence and brutality of men who will stick at nothing to secure their ends. The words, **great teeth,** or 'jaw teeth,' and **young lions,** emphasize the force and ferocity of the oppressors, whose utmost power can, however, be easily broken by Omnipotence. A slight change in the vowel-points would give the meaning 'God shall break' instead of 'Break thou'; this would be more in harmony with the context and the spirit of the Psalm, which is not imprecatory, but prophetic.

7. Two more comparisons : (1) the winter torrent, which rises with terrible rapidity and does great mischief for a short time, and then disappears, leaving the bed of the stream almost dry; (2) arrows, which are indeed carefully aimed and fitted on the string, but which fall pointless and ineffective, as if an unseen hand had broken and cut them off. The second line is obscure in phraseology, but the general meaning is clear. It is better to

8 *Let them be* as a snail which melteth and passeth away:
Like the untimely birth of a woman, that hath not seen the sun.
9 Before your pots can feel the thorns,
He shall take them away with a whirlwind, the green and the burning alike.

---

make the wicked man subject of 'aimeth,' not God, as in some interpretations.

These clauses are best read as futures—'They shall be as water,' &c.; 'If he aim his arrows, they shall be,' &c.

8. Two more metaphors, both intended to indicate the gradual and imperceptible but complete disappearance of evil men and their deeds. The snail which leaves behind it a slimy track and seems to waste away as it passes, or which shrivels up in its shell under the fierce heat of the Eastern sun, furnishes a striking picture such as Dante loves, the whole picture condensed into three words. The offspring of a premature birth, which 'cometh in vanity and departeth in darkness' (Eccles. vi. 4), describes the utter futility of the course of evil-doers. However powerful these 'sons of the mighty' may appear, they are nothing and will come to nothing. The Psalmist sees and foretells this rather than prays for it.

9. Another comparison, as vivid and bold and as unhackneyed as the last two, but obviously describing a sudden and violent overthrow of the wicked, not their silent and gradual disappearance. A whirlwind is represented as descending suddenly upon the fire of thorns which travellers have lighted in the desert for cooking purposes, and sweeping away as in a moment all the blazing sticks and embers, leaving the place bare and their whole purpose frustrated.

There is a difference of opinion, however, as to the rendering of the last words. R. V. refers them to the fuel, **the green and the burning** (sticks) **alike.** Others would refer to the contents of the vessel and render, 'the raw meat and the cooked alike'; or combine the two lines of interpretation by translating, 'both the raw meat and the hot embers.' There is, however, much to be said for the rendering accepted both by Cheyne (following Bickell) and Kirkpatrick, 'While the flesh is still raw, wrath shall sweep them away like a whirlwind.' This is substantially accepted in R.V. marg. and preserves the meaning of the word translated 'burning' in its proper reference to the fire of the Divine anger.

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: 10
He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
So that men shall say, Verily there is a reward for the 11
righteous:
Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

For the Chief Musician; *set to* Al-tashheth. *A Psalm* of 59
David: Michtam: when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: 1

---

10. This verse is not out of harmony with the 'prophetic' view of the Psalm taken in these notes, but rather confirms the interpretation that the verbs in the preceding verses are to be understood as futures. Whether such joy as is here described is justifiable or not, depends upon its nature and the grounds on which it is based. The justification is found in the next verse. The figure of washing the feet in the blood of the vanquished, natural to the age and familiar to the contemporaries of the Psalmist, must in any case be revolting to modern taste and feeling.

11. The moral element in such rejoicing is here declared. To exult on personal grounds over the defeat of an enemy, however natural, is not commended in the Old Testament. But that faithful servants of God, to whom no revelation of a future life had been made, should exult in the thought that the righteous actually are recompensed in the earth, and in manifest proofs that a righteous God does exist and will act, is not only defensible, but inevitable. Such anticipation and exultation then formed a necessary element in a righteous character. No true Israelite could contemplate with a moment's toleration the alternative 'there is no God that judgeth in the earth,' and the writer of this spirited and powerful Psalm has illustrated the principle that 'The song that nerves a nation's heart is in itself a deed.'

PSALM LIX. PRAYER IN TIME OF DANGER.

Another Psalm belonging to the group assigned to David, attributed in the title to the period of Saul's persecution, when assassins surrounded his house and he escaped through Michal's stratagem; see 1 Sam. xix. 11–17. It presents points of similarity with Ps. lviii. and others of this 'Davidic' group, but the closest parallel is with Ps. lv. As in the case of that Psalm, it seems quite impossible to suppose that David described his enemies in the terms of verses 6 and 14; verse 11 would be out of place in his

Set me on high from them that rise up against me.
2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
And save me from the bloodthirsty men.
3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul;
The mighty gather themselves together against me:
Not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD.
4 They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault:
Awake thou to help me, and behold.

---

lips, whilst verses 8 and 13 exhibit that wider outlook upon the nations around in comparison with Israel which would be, not indeed, impossible—but unnatural in David's lips under the circumstances named.

But of positive guidance to the circumstances under which it was written, we have little or none. Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah have been named as possible authors, and Theodore of Mopsuestia is at one with some of the latest critics in ascribing the Psalm to the Maccabæan period. The phraseology of verse 11 seems to point to one in authority, and if Ewald be not literally right in naming as author one of the later kings before the Babylonish captivity, he has indicated the period to which the Psalm probably belongs.

It is divided into four stanzas: verses 1-5 form an opening prayer for deliverance, verses 6-9 contain a fuller description of the foe and his insolent defiance, in verses 10-13 the prayer is renewed, while verses 14-17 anticipate deliverance as near.

1, 2. Set me on high describes a form of deliverance for which the Psalmists often prayed. In times of anarchy the 'high fortress' is the only safe place for the non-combatant; see verse 9 and Prov. xviii. 10. Two words describe the enmity to the Psalmist entertained by his foes, two others describe their character as wicked and bloodthirsty.

3. The first verb is perfect, the second, inceptive: the meaning being, 'they have lain in wait,' and now see, 'they begin to gather openly against me.' The assertion of innocence suits Hezekiah or Josiah better than later kings of Judah, though the transgression and fault here referred to may mean only that the attack had been unprovoked by any offence against the assailants.

4. The tenses still point to a process going on, to which attention is called: an idea borne out by the apostrophe praying that God would arouse Himself to see, as if He were blind and apathetic.

Even thou, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, 5
Arise to visit all the heathen:
Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. [Selah
They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, 6
And go round about the city.
Behold, they belch out with their mouth; 7
Swords are in their lips:
For who, *say they*, doth hear?
But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; 8
Thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

---

5. The pith of the whole prayer is that God would 'visit the nations,' described as 'treacherous evil-doers,' and the fact that the stress of the plea lies upon these words puts the supposition of the title as to the composition of the Psalm practically out of the question. Note the titles of God used, 'Jehovah, God of Sabaoth, God of Israel': (1) the personal, covenant-keeping, God of revelation, (2) the Ruler of all forces in earth or sky, (3) one who occupies a specially gracious relation to His chosen people, which He is asked here to maintain and manifest by the overthrow of their enemies. Many interpreters think that the accumulation of several names found in some Elohistic Psalms points to the blending of different recensions; compare Ps. l. 1. Each title has its own significance and there is nothing redundant here, but the grammatical form of Elohim is anomalous.

6. The comparison is intelligible only to those familiar with Oriental cities and the troops of scavenger dogs which gather at night-time in search of the refuse scattered in the streets by day, howling like hyenas, which indeed they resemble; compare Ps. xxii. 16. Render the second clause 'They snarl like dogs.' The phrase 'round the city' may be part of the drapery of the metaphor, and need not imply that the Psalmist was actually besieged in a city; but the figure would be much more appropriate if he was actually hemmed in by savage foes.

7. The phraseology of this verse might be illustrated by the foul language of Rabshakeh in 2 Kings xviii. The scornful defiance of Jehovah manifested by the Psalmists' enemies, backed up by brute force, formed their severest trial; compare xlii. 10, &c.

8. Again an emphatic, 'Nay, but Thou, Jehovah,' as in verse 5. The Psalmist gives a parallel reply to that which Isaiah and Hezekiah gave to the servants of Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 21, &c. Zion laughs her enemies to scorn, because God has them in derision, Ps. ii. 4.

9 O my strength, I will wait upon thee:
For God is my high tower.
10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me:
God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.
11 Slay them not, lest my people forget:
Scatter them by thy power, and bring them down,
O Lord our shield.
12 *For* the sin of their mouth, *and* the words of their lips,
Let them even be taken in their pride,
And for cursing and lying which they speak.
13 Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they be no
more:

---

9. R. V. is no doubt right in reading, with the chief versions, **my strength,** instead of 'His strength' as in A. V. and the Massoretic text. It is difficult to make sense of the latter. See Revisers' marginal note and compare the form of the refrain in verse 17.

10. Render 'My God shall come to meet me with His lovingkindness,' according to one reading in the Hebrew, followed by LXX. The archaism **prevent** is, after all explanations given, liable to be misunderstood. 'God shall let me look upon them that lie in wait for me' is nearer to the Hebrew than R. V. text, and though no doubt 'see my desire' is substantially meant, the original phrase is not quite so strong as this.

11. Slay them not, lest my people forget: a terrible prayer, but to be taken in conjunction with 'Consume them' in verse 13. The Psalmist does not pray, however, that his enemies may suffer a cruel, lingering punishment, that he may gloat over their pain; but that the visitation may be such as will form a visible monument and manifestation of God's righteous judgement, whereas a swift and complete destruction, striking awe for the moment, might soon be forgotten.

'Make them wander to and fro' (R.V. marg.) shows the kind of punishment intended: the case of Cain may perhaps be referred to, Gen. iv. 13, 14.

12. The words 'for' and 'and' are inserted in A. V. and R. V. to make the meaning clearer. But the literal translation is more forcible, **The sin of their mouth, the word of their lips!** 'Oh let them be taken then in their pride,' &c. The first line may mean that every word of their lips is a sin, and is so taken by Cheyne, Perowne, Driver, and others.

13. The phraseology of this verse shows that it must not be

And let them know that God ruleth in Jacob,
Unto the ends of the earth. [Selah
And at evening let them return, let them make a noise like 14
  a dog,
And go round about the city.
They shall wander up and down for meat, 15
And tarry all night if they be not satisfied.
But I will sing of thy strength; 16

---

understood too literally. The Psalmist prays for judgement, the manner he leaves to God, though himself desiring now this, now that form of visitation. He is chiefly anxious that the great moral ends of Divine government should be answered. In the second half of the verse render 'And let men know,' the third plural being used impersonally. The fact that the God of Jacob rules is to be known to the very ends of the earth. Such language fits well the time of Hezekiah and was actually used by that king, according to the narrative of 2 Kings xix. 19.

14. The last section of the Psalm contains a repetition of verse 6—with a difference. This difference does not amount to so much as is indicated by the translation of A. V. and R. V., **let them return**, &c., as if the Psalmist desired in somewhat truculent spirit that the fierceness of his enemies should bring its own curse upon their heads. Render, with most modern interpreters, 'And at evening they do indeed return, they snarl like dogs,' &c., a contrast being intended between their disappointed rage and the Psalmist's quiet confidence in verses 16 and 17.

15. This seems made clear by the emphatic **They** with which this verse opens, best expressed by 'As for them, they wander,' &c. These words are not found in the description of verse 6. There the Psalmist passes on to speak of his enemies' fury and defiance, here of their disappointment and defeat. The dogs have not been able to seize their prey, and they are represented as spending the night in fruitless search.

The word rendered **tarry all night** (R. V. and A. V. marg.) is understood by A. V. text, following LXX, as derived from another root; 'grudge' (A. V.) is an archaism for 'murmur.' It is found freely in Wiclif, Tyndale, and earlier English versions, for open complaint, whilst in A. V. we find the signs of transition to the modern sense of inward discontent and ill-will. See Dr. Hastings' article in his *Bible Dictionary*.

16, 17. Render 'But I—I will sing': the Psalmist emphasizes by way of contrast his own security and happiness. He

Yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning:
For thou hast been my high tower,
And a refuge in the day of my distress.
17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing praises:
For God is my high tower, the God of my mercy.

60 For the Chief Musician; set to Shushan Eduth: Michtam of David, to teach: when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt twelve thousand.

1 O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast broken us down;

---

enlarges upon the similar expressions used in verse 9, adding the clause **in the morning**—so frequent in the Psalms, see especially Ps. xxx. 5—partly to point the contrast with his own night of weeping, partly as a striking antithesis to the description of his enemies prowling in vain through the night outside his stronghold.

The repetition of the words 'refuge,' 'strength,' 'high tower' to describe God's care of His servant, now that his enemies have vanished from the scene, shows clearly the change of mood from that described in the opening verses. Prayer has brought succour and faith triumphs in the assurance of things not seen.

PSALM LX. AFTER A LOST BATTLE.

It is clear that this Psalm was written under the shadow of a great disaster. If it was originally composed in its present form, it would seem to refer to a serious defeat sustained at the hands of Edom, which the Psalmist hopes will, with Divine aid, be changed into a victory. The title refers it to a critical period in the history of David's conquests, recorded in 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14. According to the received text of that passage there is no mention of Edom in verse 13, but a slight change would harmonize the verse with 1 Chron. xviii. 12, so that we should read, David 'returned from smiting the Syrians and smote of Edom in the Valley of Salt eighteen thousand men.' The tradition mentioned in the title of the Psalm speaks of a victory gained by Joab and the slaughter of twelve thousand men. If harmony is to be established between Psalm and history, we must suppose that while David was engaged in conquering the Syrians, the Edomites took the opportunity of raiding from the South and gained a substantial victory which for the time caused a panic; but that David, like an able general, was not taken off his guard, but 'gat him a name' for the masterly way in which he defeated both enemies, Thou hast been angry ; O restore us again.

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vanquishing 'Aram' himself and dispatching Joab at the critical moment to overthrow Edom. The Valley of Salt extended from the foot of the Dead Sea to the cliffs (Akrabbim), which here form the margin of the Ghor and divide Judah from Edom.

This explanation is possible, though somewhat forced, since the history gives no hint of any defeat, while verses 2 and 3 would seem to describe a kingdom shaken to its foundations. Those who reject the title are divided in their views ; no suitable occasion before the exile has been suggested, and the majority bring down the Psalm to Maccabæan times, when the nation again possessed armies (verse 10). Against this is certainly to be set the fact that verses 5-12 are repeated in Ps. cviii, a composite Psalm found in Book V. The compiler apparently used for liturgical purposes a portion of this Psalm as found in an earlier collection, and the interval implied would necessitate a much earlier date than the Maccabæan times for the Psalm before us.

It is quite possible, however, that this Psalm also is composite and that the latter portion embodies an earlier 'Davidic' fragment which, with its characteristic references to Edom and Philistia, was utilized in the time of Jehoiakim (see 2 Kings xxiv. 10) or by an Exilic or post-Exilic Psalmist, who desired to encourage his compatriots under circumstances which might almost drive them to despair. This is substantially Ewald's explanation, though he divides the Psalm somewhat differently, and some such theory as this best accounts for the facts. Verses 1-4 would then describe the desolation of Jerusalem during its later history : verse 5 strikes a transition note, and in verses 6-8 is a quotation from an early oracle. Then verses 9-12 may be viewed either as the application of the oracle which a 'Davidic' poet had made and which the later Psalmist uses, or the later writer uses the term 'Edom' as symbolical of the enemies which were formidable in his own time.

In the title, the words **Shushan Eduth,** 'Lily of the Testimony,' stand for the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung. Compare Shoshanim Eduth in the title of Ps. lxxx. For the phrase **to teach,** which means that the Psalm was intended for committal to memory and recitation, compare 2 Sam. i. 18.

1. Parallel expressions are found in Ps. xliv. 9 ff., lxxiv. 1, universally considered to be of comparatively late date. **Cast us off** is used in the sense of 'forsaken our cause,' and **hast broken us down** = hast crushed our power ; as in 2 Sam. v. 20, a rush of water breaks through a dam, or as when a fatal breach is made in a wall ; see Ps. lxxx. 12. **Restore us again** does not necessarily imply captivity, though it recalls the ideas and phrases of Ps. lxxx.

2 Thou hast made the land to tremble; thou hast rent it:
Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.
3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things:
Thou hast made us to drink the wine of staggering.
4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee,
That it may be displayed because of the truth. [Selah

5 That thy beloved may be delivered,
Save with thy right hand, and answer us.

---

2. The figures are those of an earthquake, which causes at first a trembling of the solid ground, then fissures and chasms appear, then houses topple and fall and are shattered in ruins. Such phraseology *might* be used of the effects of an Edomite raid in David's time, but could be only hyperbolically true.

3. hard things: i. e. harsh, severe, see Exod. i. 14. The **wine of staggering** means 'the cup of God's wrath,' the effects of which upon the sufferers are like those of 'a drink of deadly wine' (P.B.V.), making the brain to reel, the limbs to totter, and causing the whole man to be prostrate and stupefied with pain and fear. Compare Isa. li. 17-23.

4. A difficulty in the interpretation of the second line arises from the use of a word which by some is understood to mean 'bow,' by others **truth,** the usage in either case being somewhat anomalous. Whichever translation be given, moreover, the connexion of this verse with the context presents some awkward features.

The LXX and other ancient versions, R. V. marg., and most modern commentators, translate (Only) 'that they may flee from before the bow.' The words in this case are spoken in bitterness, as if God were reproached for making Israel His people, and giving them a banner with His name inscribed upon it, only to put them to flight before the enemy. The alternative rendering, adopted in R. V. text, by some ancient versions, Delitzsch, and other moderns, **That it may be displayed because of the truth,** can with difficulty be obtained from the Hebrew, and does not fit well with the preceding verse. It is contended that this rendering makes a better preparation for the prayer of verse 5, but the line of cleavage in the thought of the Psalm is most naturally found at the end of verse 4.

5. According to the theory of interpretation suggested in the introduction this verse prepares the way for a fragment of another and earlier Psalm; but it is impossible to dogmatize in such a

God hath spoken in his holiness; I will exult: 6
I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.
Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; 7
Ephraim also is the defence of mine head;
Judah is my sceptre.
Moab is my washpot; 8
Upon Edom will I cast my shoe:
Philistia, shout thou because of me.

---

matter, and whatever the history of its composition the Psalm should now be studied as one whole.

Render 'Thy beloved ones,' the word being plural and referring to Israel.

6. Some interpreters, following LXX, translate 'God hath spoken in His sanctuary,' i. e. an oracle had been received by the High Priest, perhaps by Urim and Thummim. The clause, however, more probably means 'hath promised by His holiness'; compare 'hath sworn by his holiness,' Amos iv. 2. If this be so, are these the actual words of a traditional oracular utterance, or the poet's vigorous phrasing of the general promise given to David in 2 Sam. vii. 9? We incline to the former view. **I will exult:** God is certainly the speaker, and is represented as triumphantly parcelling out the land of Canaan for His people's inheritance.

The selection of places appears to be made in order to represent the possession of the whole county by the united tribes. Shechem and Succoth (near to the Jabbok) represent the west and east of Jordan respectively.

7. Gilead and Manasseh stand for the east of Jordan, Ephraim and Judah for the west, including both north and south; the two leading tribes being named which were often rivals and apt to be jealous of one another. Ephraim is the helmet on the warrior's head, and Judah the sceptre in the lawgiver's hand. Compare Gen. xlix. 10.

8. As the land of Canaan is wholly God's and has been given by Him to His people, so the nations around are absolutely in His power and are to be reduced to abject and degrading servitude. The vessel in which the feet are washed, the slave to whom the warrior throws his sandals to be cleaned, symbolize the degradation to which Moab and Edom were to be subjected and the haughty contempt of the conqueror for their boasted strength. If R. V. text **Upon Edom** is correct, the reference is to a possible, but not clearly established custom of throwing a shoe upon a piece of land to claim possession of it. The marginal rendering 'Unto Edom' seems, however, preferable,

9 Who will bring me into the strong city?
Who hath led me unto Edom?
10 Hast not thou, O God, cast us off?
And thou goest not forth, O God, with our hosts.
11 Give us help against the adversary:
For vain is the help of man.
12 Through God we shall do valiantly:
For he it is that shall tread down our adversaries.

---

and then the explanation is either as given above (compare Matt. iii. 11) or, as Duhm suggests, Edom is the corner into which soiled sandals are tossed when taken off.

In the last line, A. V. text 'Triumph thou because of me,' with the marginal note explaining that irony is intended, hardly gives the writer's meaning. If the Hebrew pointing is preserved, the **shout** which Philistia is to raise must be either that of terror or of loyal acclaim; but a slight change would give, 'Over Philistia will I shout in triumph,' as in cviii. 9, and this reading we should certainly accept.

9. After quoting this encouraging oracle, the Psalmist applies it to present circumstances. The connexion of thought is this. Whereas the oracle has spoken of triumph over Edom, at the moment Edom constitutes a great danger, an apparently insuperable obstacle, and the people are encouraged to remember that though present difficulties are great, the God whose promises are here recalled is able to give complete victory to His people.

In this light, the second line of this verse cannot mean as R. V. gives it, **Who hath led me unto Edom?** but the perfect tense must be understood as A. V. and R. V. marg., in the sense of 'who will,' or 'can lead me' into such an impregnable fortress as Petra?

10. Again we find a difference between R. V. on the one hand and A. V. with R. V. marg. on the other. The latter rendering makes hope in God to begin in this verse; we prefer R. V. text, **Hast not thou . . . cast us off?** that is, 'How can we gain the victory when God Himself seems to have abandoned us?'

11, 12. The soreness of the need drives God's people to prayer; out of the very depths of despair a cry may go up to God. Such cry is sure to be heard, a favourable answer is given and faith is reinforced, so that the Psalmist can end, as believers love to do, with the note of glad expectation which is in itself a presage of victory.

For the Chief Musician; on a stringed instrument. *A Psalm* of David. 61

Hear my cry, O God; 1
Attend unto my prayer.
From the end of the earth will I call unto thee, when my 2
heart is overwhelmed:
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

PSALM LXI. A ROYAL PRAYER.

An earnest and touching supplication, by a king, or for a king. If the inscription is followed and David be understood to be the author, the Psalm must have been written during Absalom's rebellion and his own absence from Jerusalem. There is nothing in the Psalm absolutely inconsistent with such authorship, though the expression of verse 2, 'from the end of the earth,' must in that case be understood as the hyperbole of poetry and pious longing. Most modern critics place the Psalm much later, but only agree in opposing Davidic authorship. Hezekiah, Zedekiah, Antiochus the Great, and Simon the Maccabee are amongst the names suggested for 'the king' of verse 6. If the Psalm be understood as written by one who himself was far from Palestine, praying for himself, his country, and his king, the period of Zedekiah perhaps suits the circumstances best. It is, however, quite possible that a king should speak of himself in the third person, and in that case no name is so suitable as that of David.

This short Psalm breathes petition in its first half, verses 1–4, and confidence in the second, verses 5–8. For 'Neginah' (A. V.) see Introd. p. 15. **On a stringed instrument** (R. V.) probably represents the meaning, though the form of the word is unusual.

1. Many of the Psalmist's prayers are cries, in the literal sense of the word. Driver translates 'ringing cry,' suitable for the expression of joy; here 'piercing cry' (Cheyne) is better.

2. From the end of the earth, not, as some, 'the land.' Either the phrase is used by one who was literally an exile far away from Jerusalem, or by one who in the intensity of his longing for the house of God felt himself to be as if at the ends of the earth. Render 'do I call unto thee,' (now) 'when my heart fainteth; lead me up upon a rock that is too high for me.'

Amongst the several interpretations of this last figure we must exclude such as understand the rock to be a difficulty which the Psalmist cannot surmount. There remain those which view God Himself as the rock of shelter which casts a broad shadow, suggested by A. V. and R. V., and those which interpret the word,

3 For thou hast been a refuge for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
4 I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever:
I will take refuge in the covert of thy wings. [Selah
5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows:
Thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.

---

as is usual in the Psalter, to indicate a place of refuge, to which the Psalmist by his own effort cannot climb. The Hebrew means literally to 'lead on,' a condensed expression for 'lead me to and place me on.' We would therefore translate, 'Lead me up upon the rock that is too high for me,' see R. V. marg. The Psalmist is in such straits that he not only needs Divine protection, but Divine help to reach the desired refuge.

3, 4. The meaning of the last verse is now made clear. God Himself has been to the Psalmist in the past **a refuge** and a **strong tower** (verse 3), and with this thought in mind he prays that he may be led to that Rock which is higher than he and can ever shelter him (R. V. text). God's 'tent' or visible abode, with which His presence is indissolubly associated (verse 4), is dear to the Psalmist's heart, and with this in view he prays that he may be led once again to that asylum which he cannot reach by unaided effort (R. V. margin).

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to separate the spiritual from the material element in the prayer of the Psalmist, to distinguish between symbol and thing symbolized. The association of a spiritual presence of God with a definite locality was always close under the old covenant, and the lofty conceptions of worship given by Christ in John iv. 21–24 have not even yet fully pervaded Christendom.

5. Unless we know the circumstances of the writer, we cannot decide whether the tenses in this verse indicate past experience or express confidence for the future. If David be the speaker, it must be understood that Absalom's rebellion has been crushed, but the king is not yet restored. If a pious Israelite of the later monarchy be in question, these 'prophetic perfects' express his assurance that God will be faithful to His covenant. Similarly, on the former hypothesis, the word 'me' should be inserted as in R. V.; on the latter, the marginal rendering is preferable—'Thou hast granted possession unto them that fear thy name,' i. e. wilt never leave thine own people without the inheritance which is theirs by covenant, with a primary reference to the land of Promise

Thou wilt prolong the king's life: 6
His years shall be as many generations.
He shall abide before God for ever: 7
O prepare lovingkindness and truth, that they may preserve him.

So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, 8
That I may daily perform my vows.

62 For the Chief Musician; after the manner of Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

My soul waiteth only upon God: 1

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itself and a general allusion to that 'heritage' which is the portion of God's people wherever they dwell.

6. If a king speaks these words, he alludes to himself in the third person because the promise of long life and abundant posterity was made officially to David and his dynasty (2 Sam. vii); but the interpretation which makes this a prayer for the king, with assurance that it will be answered, is simpler and more natural.

7. abide corresponds to 'be established' in 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13, 16, the standard expression of the promise to David's 'house.'

prepare, *lit.* 'appoint' or 'give charge to' Lovingkindness and Truth as celestial ministrants, that they may guard and keep him. Compare lvii. 3, where the same messengers are spoken of as sent forth to deliver God's servant.

8. The use of the first person in this last verse favours the view of those who understand David to be the speaker throughout. On the other hand, their transition from a prayer for the king to a declaration of personal thanksgiving and resolve is surely not unnatural. Later Jewish interpretation made the whole Psalm national, and though this was probably not its primary significance, the individual Israelite may well stand for the whole people in his resolve to be faithful to his allegiance and render praise and service to God, when God in His mercy favours Zion, guards its king, and bestows their full inheritance upon those who fear His name.

PSALM LXII. TRUST IN GOD ALONE.

This Psalm is like xxxix. in style, in its use of words, and in its title. Ewald, Perowne, and others attribute it to the same author: the former says, 'a prophet of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes and one of the great pillars of the true religion in strife with the dissolute men of his time.' Kirkpatrick finds affinities with Ps. iv,

From him *cometh* my salvation.
2 He only is my rock and my salvation:
He is my high tower; I shall not be greatly moved.
3 How long will ye set upon a man,
That ye may slay *him*, all of you,

---

and (with Delitzsch) inclines to place the Psalm as David's at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Baettigen and others interpret it of the sufferings of the community during the Maccabæan, or, at earliest, the Persian period. There is nothing clearly to prove, or certainly to disprove, any of these theories, though we incline to follow Ewald. What is more important is to mark the unusual tenacity and strength of the Psalmist's confidence. More triumphant Psalms may easily be found; it would not be easy to point to a more signal illustration of the quiet, invincible assurance which marks the 'iustum ac tenacem propositi virum.' The three stanzas 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12 do but repeat the main theme.

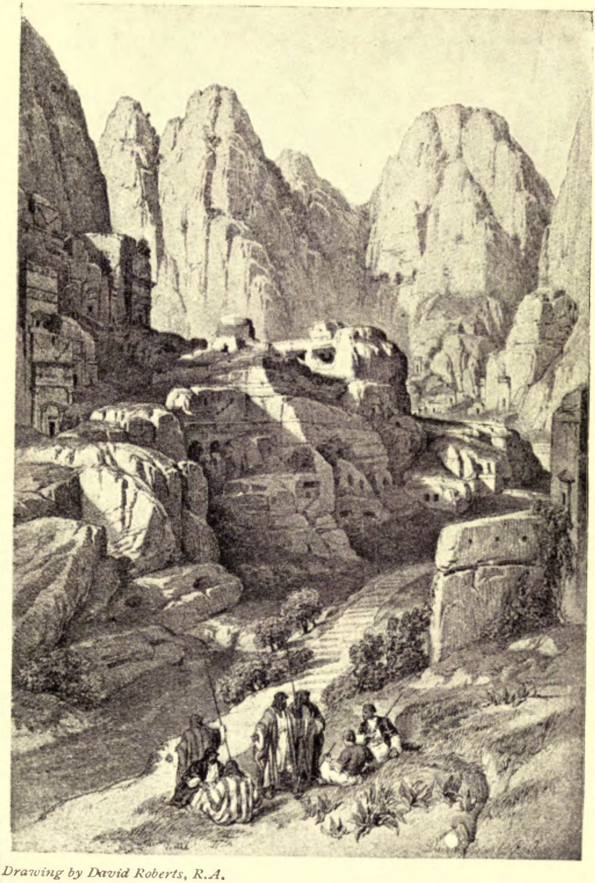
For **Jeduthun** see Introd. to Ps. xxxix, possibly the same as Ethan (1 Chron. xv. 17, &c.), a leader of the Temple choir.

1. The opening word strikes the keynote—**Only**! A comment upon this particle is given in Ps. xxxix, but as it occurs six times in this Psalm, and its repetition stamps the whole lyric with a characteristic impress, it will be well to understand it thoroughly.

The usage of this word *ak* is given by the dictionaries as twofold: (1) it asseverates, with the meaning *surely*, either in reference to (*a*) an acknowledged, or (*b*) a newly perceived truth; (2) it restricts, with the meaning *only*, either (*a*) in relation to the context = 'howbeit,' or (*b*) in relation to ideas generally, with a strong exclusive force. It is not difficult to see, however, that these meanings are closely connected, and whichever of the two predominates the other is probably present in the background. A strong assertion, with a side reference to other possible alternatives strenuously excluded—as if the speaker would say 'Yes, but after all, and in spite of all, *this* remains the one truth on the subject'—appears to give the full meaning. 'Only upon God doth my soul silently wait': this 'wise passiveness' of the spirit, waiting in stillness for God to speak and act, is illustrated briefly in xxxix. 2, more fully in Ps. xxxvii.

2. The wise man will do nothing but look in one direction for help, when from no direction but that one can help come. Hence the expectation of verse 1 corresponds to the assertion of verse 2; calm certainty being characteristic of both clauses alike.

3. A sudden and vigorous outburst of indignant defiance. The Psalmist has been silent God-wards, but his foes have been pressing



Drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

A STRONG CITY IN EDOM (PETRA)

Like a bowing wall, like a tottering fence?
They only consult to thrust him down from his excellency; 4
They delight in lies:
They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.
[Selah
My soul, wait thou only upon God; 5
For my expectation is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation: 6
He is my high tower; I shall not be moved.
With God is my salvation and my glory: 7
The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.
Trust in him at all times, ye people; 8
Pour out your heart before him:

---

him sore, and he turns upon them, one man at bay against a host. 'How long will ye rush upon a man, battering him, all of you?' Only too glad if the strong wall they have been assaulting gives any sign of tottering to its fall. The A. V. misleads by inserting 'Ye shall be'; if words are supplied at all, we should read 'as though he were a bowing wall,' &c.

4. Another **only** marks the character and action of the enemies; their one object is to compass the Psalmist's overthrow. Not in appearance, however; their assaults are not always overt. They had learned how to use the honeyed phrases of 'the candied tongue' and to 'crook the pregnant hinges of the knee.' But their inward curses are more audible than they had thought, and their victim is not deceived by their protestations.

5. The calm confidence of verse 1 has been disturbed by the thought of the baseness of these hypocrites. The Psalmist recalls his soul to her earlier mood and bids her turn once more to the only quarter from whence hope and help can come.

6, 7. Repetition, but without tautology. Faith has ascended another turn of the spiral way; 'I shall not be greatly moved' has become 'I shall not be moved in any wise.' The slightly varied recurrence of the phrase which expressed confidence in the first stanza falls musically upon the ear with a distinctly poetical effect, such as mediaeval singers produced in the triolet and the rondeau.

8. An exhortation such as is found in Psalms xxiv, 1, and other 'prophetic' Psalms. **Ye people** is best understood of Israel; not the world at large, nor the Psalmist's immediate disciples, but, as the LXX following another reading, 'the whole assembly of

God is a refuge for us. [Selah
9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high
degree are a lie:
In the balances they will go up;
They are together lighter than vanity.
10 Trust not in oppression,
And become not vain in robbery:
If riches increase, set not your heart *thereon.*
11 God hath spoken once,
Twice have I heard this;
That power belongeth unto God:
12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy:
For thou renderest to every man according to his
work.

---

the people.' The personal Deliverer will prove to be a national Refuge.

9. Here *ak* introduces a reference to other grounds of confidence. With firm hand the Psalmist sweeps them all away. Two words for 'man' are used here, as in xlix. 21, to distinguish the lofty and the lowly: alike they are but 'a breath,' or worse, **a lie:** weighed in the scales of the sanctuary, **they go up**; for all of them, together, high and low alike, are 'lighter than a breath.'

10. Hence a lesson which the prophet would impress upon his generation—one more needed under the later monarchy than in David's time—not to trust in wealth unjustly acquired, for such prosperity is hollow and deceptive.

11, 12. And, to give weight to his warning, the Psalmist gives the substance of a revelation repeatedly impressed on his own mind as by a direct voice from heaven. The emphatic form of the utterance 'once, yea twice,' is similar to the usage in Proverbs, 'three things, yea four,' xxx. 15; 'six things, yea seven,' vi. 16. The oracle says that Power and Mercy, Strength and Loving-kindness, should go always together—are to be found, indeed in the full sense, in God alone; therefore in Him, and in Him alone should the people trust. It is interesting to note that in the mind of the truly religious Israelite there is no contradistinction between mercy and justice. To render to every man according to his work is a mark of love as well as power, and is possible only to perfect power and perfect love combined in the All-perfect.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. 63

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: 1

PSALM LXIII. MORNING ORISONS.

From early times in the Christian Church this Psalm has been used for morning devotion. The Apostolical Constitutions refer to it as beginning the worship of the day, and Athanasius and Chrysostom commend it for the purpose. But it is not, properly speaking, a morning prayer. Greek and Latin versions alike favour the idea through their rendering of the opening words, and all the English versions keep the word 'early.' The Psalm, however, is the expression of earnest longing for God and His house, on the part of one who is far from the sanctuary and in circumstances of personal difficulty and danger. The tone of lofty spiritual aspiration which pervades the earlier portion is akin to that of Pss. xlii. and lxxxiv, but in this respect the Psalm before us represents perhaps the high-water mark of the Psalter.

If the Psalm were written by David, as the title suggests, no more appropriate occasion could be found than **when he was in the wilderness of Judah,** not during the persecution of Saul, but at the time of the rebellion of Absalom. The circumstances are recorded in 2 Sam. xv.–xvii. Absalom had 'stolen the hearts of the men of Israel.' The king and his followers had effected a hasty flight, the ark had been sent back to the city, the self-exiled were 'faint in the wilderness,' though refreshed by the kindly feeling of an Ittai and a Ziba; and David, oppressed by the consciousness of having brought trouble upon himself and of having been unfaithful to his earlier allegiance to Jehovah, doubtless longed for renewed communion with God, and the visible tokens of the presence of God, in safety and in peace again. It is quite intelligible, moreover, that in David this deep and earnest religious feeling might be blended with the passionate denunciation of enemies with which the Psalm closes, and the mention of 'the king' in verse 11 fits the circumstances of David better than any other that can be named.

Nevertheless, it is most probable that this beautiful lyric, with its darkened and troubled close, belongs to a much later period. The title is vague, and apparently refers to 1 Sam. xxiii. and xxiv, when David was not yet king, while verse 11 cannot refer to Saul. Certain expressions in the Psalm (verses 2 and 3 and elsewhere) point to a later date. The allusions to enemies do not fit the occasion of Absalom's rebellion. It is true that 'if the reference of the Psalm to David is abandoned, it is idle to speculate as to the author and his circumstances' (Kirkpatrick). There is nothing to prevent the modern interpreter from illustrat-

My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,
In a dry and weary land, where no water is.
2 So have I looked upon thee in the sanctuary,
To see thy power and thy glory.
3 For thy lovingkindness is better than life;
My lips shall praise thee.

---

ing the Psalm by a reference to David's experiences, or to those of later saints; but no conclusion may be safely based upon the tradition embodied in the title, whilst for our own part we are quite unwilling to accept the sweeping assumption which would postpone all highly spiritual utterances in the Psalter to some late post-Exilic period. The value of the Psalm is not impaired, though its interest may be somewhat diminished, by our ignorance of its authorship.

1. Two names for God are here employed, but they cannot be accurately distinguished, and perhaps Elohim in the address is a substitute for Yahweh.

R.V. marg. is right in its rendering, 'Earnestly will I seek thee.' The root of the word is the same as that from which 'day-break' is derived, but the usage in such passages as Prov. viii. 17 is distinctly in favour of 'seek diligently' (R.V.), not 'early' as in A.V.

soul and **flesh** represent the whole man. The phrase **dry and weary land** perhaps gave rise to the tradition concerning the wilderness of Judah, but in any case it must not be understood literally. It is spiritual drought from which the Psalmist is suffering.

2. He recalls the past, the high communion with God which he has enjoyed **in the sanctuary**—an expression which may refer to the worship of God before the ark, but more probably indicates the Temple-worship. The only difficulty lies in the introductory word 'So,' and concerns the exact sense in which the past is recalled and its relation to the present. The transposition of clauses effected in A. V. is grammatically possible, but R. V. almost certainly gives the meaning, 'Thus have I gazed upon Thee in the sanctuary,' eager to see that revelation of majesty and glory which has been granted there to worshippers like Isaiah (vi. 1-3). There the Psalmist has strained his wistful eyes and been satisfied; here also he earnestly seeks that he may find.

3. A further reason for spiritual longing. The Psalmist has beheld not only God's glorious majesty, but the tenderness of His love; and the thought of this, whilst impelling him to seek for fuller revelation, inspires present thanksgiving. It is true that the

So will I bless thee while I live: 4
I will lift up my hands in thy name.
My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; 5
And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips;
When I remember thee upon my bed, 6
And meditate on thee in the night watches.
For thou hast been my help, 7
And in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.
My soul followeth hard after thee: 8
Thy right hand upholdeth me.

---

connexion of thought between the halves of verses 2 and 3 is not quite clear, and Hupfeld conjectures that a transposition of clauses has taken place in every verse down to the end of 9. Delitzsch thinks the *chiasmus* (crossing) of clauses to be intentional on the part of the poet. Little difficulty will be found if the clauses are taken as they stand and some little latitude be allowed—such as must be granted to Hebrew conjunctions—in the rendering of the connecting particles.

4. So has not the same meaning as in verse 2. It seems to = 'accordingly' or 'therefore.' Longing has now passed into enjoyment, prayer is lost in praise.

5. Again the language is purely metaphorical. He who sent water to Israel in the desert has quenched the Psalmist's thirst; He who fed His people with manna can satisfy the hungry soul: compare Pss. xxii. 26, xxxvi. 8. No allusion to sacrificial feasts need be supposed.

6. The insertion of **And** in the second line, thus throwing the whole verse into close dependence upon the last, appears to be a mistake. R. V. marg. correctly renders 'I meditate'; and in that case the verse stands alone, giving an illustration of the way in which the soul is sustained and comforted by God's presence. *Lit.* 'night-thoughts' are intended, and the allusion makes this the more appropriate for a morning Psalm. The Jewish night contained three watches; compare 'the middle watch' in Judges vii. 19.

7. Two co-ordinate clauses, referring to past and future respectively, and both together expressing that exultant confidence into which the Psalmist has passed after the opening stage of strong desire is over.

8. The mutual relation between God and His trusting servant is here beautifully described. The soul cleaves to the strong right Hand which upholds, and as the sustaining Hand draws the

9 But those that seek my soul, to destroy it,
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.
10 They shall be given over to the power of the sword:
They shall be a portion for foxes.
11 But the king shall rejoice in God:
Every one that sweareth by him shall glory;
For the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

64 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint:

---

upheld spirit follows close. Such action and reaction of the Divine and the human belong to the very life of true religion; desire leads to delight and delight quickens desire. Neither chronology nor logic must be allowed to determine the conditions of the communion of souls. 'Abide in me and I in you' describes a relation which may be enjoyed, but cannot be defined.

9. An abrupt descent from heaven to earth, from communion with God to wrath against man. The Psalmist feels no inconsistency; his belief in God necessitates his conviction that those who oppose Him will be destroyed.

lower parts of the earth: is here a synonym for Sheol, the under-world. So perhaps in Isa. xliv. 23, but this is doubtful; while in Ps. cxxxix. 15 the phrase has another meaning. For use in N. T. see Eph. iv. 9.

10. They shall be slain by the sword of justice and their corpses left to be the prey of jackals—unhonoured and unsung.

11. The connexion here, as in lxi. 6, seems to imply that 'the king' is the speaker, who refers to himself in the third person. He is identified with the cause of God; he and those who with him reverently invoke the name of God shall triumph and be had in honour, whilst all those who are identified with the cause of falsehood, perhaps are worshippers of false gods, shall be put to silence for ever in the grave.

PSALM LXIV. JUDGEMENT UPON THE WICKED.

A picture is here presented, very familiar to all readers of the Psalter, but in this instance sketched with specially vigorous strokes, of the manifold and malicious machinations of the wicked against the righteous and the Divine judgement which awaits them. These two ideas occupy the two parts of the Psalm, verses 1–6 and 7–12 respectively. The treatment possesses no very distinctive features, though the words are no mere echoes from other writers,

Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
Hide me from the secret counsel of evil-doers; 2
From the tumult of the workers of iniquity:
Who have whet their tongue like a sword, 3
And have aimed their arrows, even bitter words:
That they may shoot in secret places at the perfect: 4
Suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
They encourage themselves in an evil purpose; 5
They commune of laying snares privily;
They say, Who shall see them?
They search out iniquities; We have accomplished, *say* 6
they, a diligent search:
And the inward thought of every one, and the heart, is deep.

---

neither is there any clear indication of date. Earlier commentators were inclined to compare this Psalm with vii, and assign it, as in the title, to David, but most now place it in the post-Exilic period. The language does not very appropriately fit either Saul's persecution or Absalom's rebellion.

1. complaint (R. V.) rather than 'prayer' (A. V.). See Job vii. 13 and the fuller parallel in Ps. lv. 2.

Some commentators render 'Thou wilt guard—hide,' &c., the future of confident expectation rather than the imperative of petition. **Fear of the enemy** means the terror which he inspires.

2. Secret plotting is contrasted with open tumultuous raging as in Ps. ii. 1, 2. But the former seems to predominate in this case. The position is that of a righteous man living in the midst of an ordered but godless community, not of one persecuted by a king, nor of a king driven from his throne by rebellion.

3, 4. Parallels to this phraseology are numerous, especially in Ps. lv, where the situation is somewhat similar. For the tongue as a sword see lv. 21 and lvii. 4. For the shooting of arrows, either bitter words or evil devices, see xi. 2 and lviii. 7. For the secret machinations of the evil-doer see x. 8 and xvii. 12.

5, 6. The care with which these treacherous plots are conceived and hatched is here described. The conspirators strengthen one another in evil and are agreed that there is no eye of Providence to detect them, no hand of Providence to expose them.

The word translated **search** hardly conveys the idea in English. Render 'They have carefully devised iniquities; we have perfected,

7 But God shall shoot at them;
With an arrow suddenly shall they be wounded.
8 So they shall be made to stumble, their own tongue being
against them:
All that see them shall wag the head.
9 And all men shall fear;
And they shall declare the work of God,
And shall wisely consider of his doing.
10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust
in him;
And all the upright in heart shall glory.

---

say they, our careful device; and each man's inmost thought, and his heart, is deep.' The only period in David's history which at all corresponds with this picture would be his early life at the court of Saul.

7. But no heart is so deep that its thoughts are hidden from God, and no plot is so perfect but He can frustrate it. God has His arrows and will use them. The tenses here convey 'perfect historical certainty'; the Psalmist is as sure of the coming judgement as if he saw it with his eyes.

8. Render 'And they are made to stumble': *lit.* 'they make to stumble,' the 'they' being impersonal and conveying the meaning of a passive voice. R. V. marg. understands 'they' of the persecuted righteous, which is cumbrous and unnecessary. **Their own tongue being against them** conveys in a striking form the idea so often expressed of the wicked being caught in their own trap and falling into the pit they have made for another.

For **wag the head** in scorn, see Ps. xxii. 7; Jer. xlviii. 27.

9. The end shall be secured which the Psalmists chiefly desire when they contemplate with satisfaction the overthrow of the wicked. The moral government of God shall be vindicated, men in general shall be struck with awe and shall declare the judgement to be the act of God and shall understand His work. The satisfaction is that of the spectator or reader of the drama who rejoices in the administration of 'poetic justice.'

10. This end is secured by—what happens so seldom in real life—the perfect identification of one side with the cause of righteousness, as the other is with that of iniquity. The Psalmist has not the slightest doubt that he and his friends, who appear to be few and feeble, are **the righteous** and **the upright in heart.** Their

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm. A Song of David. 65

Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: 1
And unto thee shall the vow be performed.
O thou that hearest prayer, 2

---

part is to 'take refuge' in Jehovah and **glory**, or enjoy holy exultation in the thought of His supreme power and their own perfect security and peace.

PSALM LXV. A HARVEST THANKSGIVING.

The Psalm includes much more than praise for the blessings of a fruitful earth. It includes history as well as nature in its scope, and whilst it may have been intended for a festival, either at the presentation of first-fruits or at the ingathering of harvest, verses 7 and 8 would appear to point to a recent national deliverance. Delitzsch has suggested the period of reviving prosperity after the retirement of Sennacherib (see Isa. xxvii. 30), whilst some MSS. of the LXX refer it to the return from captivity, 'a song of Jeremiah and Ezekiel'! Baethgen thinks that the universalist tone of the Psalm proves it to be later than the time of the second Isaiah.

On the whole, the period of Hezekiah fits the conditions fairly well, but the Psalm is general in its character, and in modernized forms has been sung with appropriateness under very varied conditions. One somewhat curious use has been made of it, since it forms part of the Office for the Dead in the services of both the Eastern and the Western Church.

It falls naturally into three parts: approach to God, 1–4; praise to Him as Ruler of all nations, 5–8; and as Giver of fruitful seasons and the abundant harvest of the present year, 9–13.

For the word **Song** in the title, as a more general description than Psalm, see Introd. p. 17.

1. *lit.* 'For thee, O God, praise is silent in Zion,' which may either be interpreted as in A.V. and R.V. **praise waiteth** (R.V. marg. renders 'There shall be silence and praise,' surely an intolerable alternative), or with a slightly different pointing we may read with LXX 'Praise is comely.' The last is one of those smooth and easy ways out of a difficulty which the careful textual critic usually suspects. Probably the meaning is that praise, like prayer, is often truest when in deep and still devotion it waits in the presence of God. The thought of the Hebrew worshipper, however, is not that of the modern poet, whose rapture 'transcends the imperfect offices of prayer and praise,' but that in reverence he is silent for a while before his king and then pours forth thanksgiving and supplication.

Unto thee shall all flesh come.
3 Iniquities prevail against me:
As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.
4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to
approach *unto thee*,
That he may dwell in thy courts:
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,
The holy place of thy temple.
5 By terrible things thou wilt answer us in righteousness,

2. If **all flesh** implies, as it should, all mankind, it does not follow that a late date must be assigned to the Psalm. In the time of Hezekiah Israel's outlook upon the nations had been greatly widened, and the prophecy embodied in Isa. ii. 2, Micah iv. 1, shows that the prophetic range of vision at this time included all peoples.

3. R. V. 'words' or 'matters of iniquities' shows that the Hebrew emphasizes the counts of the indictment which the Psalmist enumerates in his self-accusation. The thought is that of xl. 12, but the confession that his sins are too strong for him is precisely the best preparation for the forgiveness which the next clause anticipates. **Thou** is emphatic: only God can purge away such evils.

The alternation between singular and plural, **me** and **our,** suggests the relation in the Psalmist's mind between the individual and the community. He does not make the distinction so sharply as modern habits of thought require. He praises and prays as a representative Israelite. For a treatment of the whole subject see Introd. to Vol. II; compare also note on lv. 12.

4. The whole nation is privileged to enjoy closeness of access to God in His temple. The Psalmist contemplates such an approach for the nation by means of its representatives in the worship of a great festival; and, after emphasizing the happiness of those permitted thus to draw near, he expresses the determination rightly to use the opportunity. The force of the cohortative, literally translated 'let us be satisfied,' may be given as 'we would fain be satisfied' with the rich supplies of grace which all need, but which all cannot obtain, as we can in Thy holy place, the home for Thy specially favoured guests.

5. Render 'Thou dost answer us'; the meaning is not that in answer to the prayer now offered God will greatly intervene, but a general description is given of God's continuous regard for His people, with special reference to a recent manifestation of it.

terrible things, i. e. recent events in their terror-striking

O God of our salvation;
Thou that art the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of them that are afar off upon the sea:
Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; 6
Being girded about with might:
Which stilleth the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their 7
waves,
And the tumult of the peoples.
They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at 8
thy tokens:
Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening
to rejoice.

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effect upon the nations, inspiring awe in all who witness them; these, however, are all done **in righteousness,** and their chief significance lies in the vindication of Divine justice and equity.

The intervention in question was in Israel's favour and implied 'salvation' for them, but it is viewed as an act of the God of the whole earth, who may be and ought to be trusted by all nations alike, far and near. The description of universality is as complete as Jewish geography could make it, including **the ends of the earth** and **the sea, afar off** (R. V. marg.).

6, 7. Render 'Setting fast the mountains with His strength, girding Himself with might, Thou who stillest,' &c. He is God of nature as well as of nations, and the Psalmist passes easily and naturally from one to the other. The two great symbols of strength and majesty in this world are the mountains and the ocean: the everlasting hills so firmly fixed that no strength can move them, the waves of the sea so restless that no might can control them. But it is God who establishes the great mountains in their place and stills the waves by a word from His lips. Surely the nations ought to fear, and may place their whole confidence in such a God as this.

8. Fear and joy characterize His worshippers. **Thy tokens** means the signs of God's power and presence which are manifest even in regions so remote that 'God Himself scarce seemed there to be'; nay, the regions of the farthest east and loneliest west are made to 'sing for joy' by Him who fills and illumines all. **Outgoings** applies properly to the east, whence the sun starts to run its race, but may be applied to the 'portals' (Kay) of morning and evening alike. All may well rejoice because the King, whose glory is thus

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it,
Thou greatly enrichest it;
The river of God is full of water:
Thou providest them corn, when thou hast so prepared the earth.
10 Thou waterest her furrows abundantly;
Thou settlest the ridges thereof:
Thou makest it soft with showers;
Thou blessest the springing thereof.
11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness;
And thy paths drop fatness.
12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness:
And the hills are girded with joy.

---

celebrated, rules in righteousness—only evil-doers have cause to dread His might.

9. Some would render 'Thou hast visited the land and made it plentiful,' finding in the words special acknowledgement of a good season. So Kirkpatrick, who joins the clause **greatly enriching it** with the former part of the verse.

The 'brook of God' is the rain, former and latter, which He sends in its season. In the last line render, with R. V. marg., 'for so preparest Thou the earth.'

10. Render 'Abundantly watering its furrows, levelling its ridges, Thou softenest it with showers, its upgrowth Thou dost bless.' The point of view here is that of spring-time, in which the effect of winter rain becomes visible, rather than of autumn when the 'upgrowth' is complete. But the following verses show that the Psalmist is offering a general thanksgiving for what Hooker called 'God's blessings springing out of my mother earth,' and does not confine himself to the aspects of one particular season.

11. *Lit.* 'Thou hast crowned the year of thy goodness'; if this be the meaning, the words point to the harvest as the culmination of a year full of bounty. The translation of A. V. and R. V. is based on a possible, though somewhat doubtful, construction of the Hebrew. It gives the better sense, and some grammarians defend this interpretation.

thy paths drop fatness, i. e. the steps of God's path as He passes over the land are marked by enriching showers, such as cover even the valley of weeping with blessings, lxxxiv. 6.

12. The word 'wilderness' (*midbār*) should be rightly under-

The pastures are clothed with flocks; 13
The valleys also are covered over with corn;
They shout for joy, they also sing.

For the Chief Musician. A Song, a Psalm. 66

Make a joyful noise unto God, all the earth: 1

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stood. Not only does it contain 'pastures,' it is itself the open country, the very land of pasturage, as distinguished from enclosed arable 'fields.'

13. This closing description is full of graphic metaphor. Not only are the hills girded with garlands of rejoicing (verse 12), but the white fleeces of the sheep seem to clothe the meadows, the sheltered vales between the hills are gaily decked with wheat, and together, or in response to one another, they shout with all their heart, 'yea, they sing'! Delitzsch says that meadows and corn-fields cannot sing, and that 'the expression demands men as subject.' This is an unusually prosaic touch on the part of a spirited as well as learned commentator. But it is true that it needs men with poetic souls to hear that joyous singing, and men with devout hearts to hear the hymn which the hills and valleys raise and re-echo to God.

PSALM LXVI. THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE.

Is the deliverance here celebrated personal, or national? The first twelve verses strike the national, the last eight the personal note. Some interpreters consider that the two elements are distinct, that two voices are heard, or even that two Psalms have been combined. Others, e. g. Kirkpatrick, 'hear in these verses the voice of the responsible and representative leader of the nation (not necessarily himself the author of the Psalm) who identifies its fortunes and interests with his own,' while the prevailing modern method is to merge the personal and individual element entirely in the life of the community. On this last supposition, the church-nation speaks from verse 13 onwards, as well as in the former part of the Psalm. With this last view we cannot agree; but, given the individual singer, it seems the most natural thing in the world that he should first praise God for national mercies and then touch upon personal blessings, or give thanks in the reverse order. Only it is to be borne in mind (see note on lxv. 3) that the sense of common national life was stronger, and of individual privilege and responsibility much weaker, in the Jew than in modern western civilization.

As to the deliverance referred to, the choice appears to lie

2 Sing forth the glory of his name:
Make his praise glorious.
3 Say unto God, How terrible are thy works!
Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies
submit themselves unto thee.
4 All the earth shall worship thee,
And shall sing unto thee;
They shall sing to thy name. [Selah
5 Come, and see the works of God;
He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

---

between the destruction of Sennacherib's army and the Return from exile. The data for a judgement are lacking; but here, as in Ps. lxv, some consider that the universalism of the Psalm demands the later date, a view we do not share.

The first stanza (1-4) calls upon all lands to praise and acknowledge God, for (5-7) He has proved His power in history, notably at the time of the Exodus. The third stanza (8-12) calls upon the nations to recognize the fresh intervention by which God has delivered His chosen people, while in the last two, 13-15 and 16-20, the individual speaker pays his own tribute of worship to God and calls upon men to hear his testimony.

1, 2. The whole earth is to be the concert-chamber and all its inhabitants the chorus; no narrower sphere will suffice to set forth the praises of God for the deliverance now celebrated. In the last line the verb is used with two accusatives—**Make His praise glory** or 'Make glory His praise.' The former is suggested by the order of the words in Hebrew, and is adopted in A. V. and R. V.

3. For **terrible** see lxv. 5. The translation 'submit themselves' is insufficient. Render 'Yield feigned obedience,' R. V. marg. (P. B. V. 'be found liars unto thee'), or better, 'must come cringing unto thee.' The same phrase is used in Deut. xxxiii. 29 of the insincere but enforced homage which Israel's enemies shall render to her.

4. The invitation is here turned into a prophecy; willing or unwilling, all must submit.

5. The tone is that of a prophetic teacher who understands the meaning of history and undertakes to explain it to those who will listen. 'Come and see' corresponds to 'come and hear' in verse 16. The address in this case is to the nations, who are bidden to study the past history of Israel and learn its lessons.

He turned the sea into dry land: 6
They went through the river on foot:
There did we rejoice in him.
He ruleth by his might for ever; 7
His eyes observe the nations:
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. [Selah
O bless our God, ye peoples, 8
And make the voice of his praise to be heard:
Which holdeth our soul in life, 9
And suffereth not our feet to be moved.

---

6. The Exodus is with Psalmists and prophets a standing illustration of God's power and goodness. The passage of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan are examples of different ways in which God can bring His people past or over obstacles.

There is concrete and graphic; it points as with the finger to a landmark in history always conspicuous, always instructive. But the tense of the following verb gives some difficulty. It properly means (1) 'let us rejoice,' R. V. marg., which fits ill with 'He turned' and 'they went,' and is inconsistent with the idea of an address to the nations. On the other hand, (2) **did we rejoice,** while making excellent sense and boldly identifying the Israel of the Psalmist with the Israel of the Exodus, does some violence to grammar. Still, as Delitzsch, after accepting (1) in an earlier edition, in a later edition defends (2), adducing 2 Sam. xxii. 38 as a parallel, it may be considered safe to adopt it.

7. Here the tenses express general truths and continuous Divine action. He who at special moments vouchsafes special manifestations preserves in the intervals a watchful rule against which rebellious nations lift their heads, or tongues, or hands in vain. Thus Isaiah speaks of Sennacherib as lifting his eyes and voice not so much against Jerusalem as against the God of Jerusalem, the Holy One of Israel; 2 Kings xix. 22.

8. Notice that the address is still to the nations at large, although the history of Israel and the special mercies which 'our God' has shown to His chosen people are dwelt upon. The tone recalls Ps. cxxvi. 2, when the nations said, Jehovah hath done great things for them.

9. holdeth our soul: rather, with R.V. marg., 'putteth,' or better, 'hath set our soul in life.' It is not the continuous maintenance of life, but the deliverance from danger of death and setting in safety that is commemorated. For a similar juxtaposition of

10 For thou, O God, hast proved us:
Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.
11 Thou broughtest us into the net;
Thou layedst a sore burden upon our loins.
12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads;
We went through fire and through water;
But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.
13 I will come into thy house with burnt offerings,
I will pay thee my vows,
14 Which my lips have uttered,

---

clauses, in which the keeping of the feet from falling is equivalent to preserving from death, see lvi. 13.

10. This and the two following verses show that a particular deliverance is referred to. Both verbs in this verse are used of metals, for the processes of assaying and smelting; the people have been passed through a refiner's fire, a furnace of terrible testing, but they have come through it safely.

11. Here punishment rather than purification is described. Some doubt arises as to the word translated **net**, some versions and commentators reading 'prison'; also as to the one rendered **sore burden.** The latter occurs only here; the Targum understands it to mean 'chain,' and Baethgen raises the objection that a burden is not laid upon the loins. The LXX and Syriac translate generally 'tribulations.' There is no sufficient reason, however, for departing from R. V.

12. For the strong figure of the first line see Isa. li. 23. As the vanquished in battle are crushed under the horse-hoofs and chariot-wheels of the victorious army, so Israel had suffered outrage and ignominy at the hands of cruel enemies. Fire and water symbolize dangers in all languages, and the 'place of abundance' stands for ease, happiness, prosperity. See xxiii. 5, 'my cup is—abundance!'

13, 14. Ewald's conjecture that the Psalm from this point onwards is a fragment of another composition has this in its favour, that the point of view from which deliverance is henceforth regarded is markedly different; see Introduction. Not only does the first person singular replace the plural, but the attitude of worship, the persons addressed, and the mention of 'iniquity,' all suggest an altered point of view. But though there is difference between the two parts of the Psalm, there is no inconsistency. An individual Israelite, presumably a representative leader, either priest or king, here speaks, as a solo may follow a chorus. He

And my mouth hath spoken, when I was in distress.
I will offer unto thee burnt offerings of fatlings, 15
With the incense of rams;
I will offer bullocks with goats. [Selah
Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, 16
And I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
I cried unto him with my mouth, 17
And he was extolled with my tongue.
If I regard iniquity in my heart, 18
The Lord will not hear:
But verily God hath heard; 19
He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

---

presents himself in the name of the people before the altar of God, bringing the offerings which betoken gratitude and consecration to the service of the Great Deliverer.

15. It seems hardly necessary to examine the details of Levitical ritual, in order to determine the exact significance of the various sacrifices mentioned here. 'Fatlings,' 'rams,' 'goats,' 'bullocks' are mentioned generally and poetically as in Ps. l and Isa. i, and in their accumulation the clauses are intended to express ample and abundant oblations. Some have sought, however, to show that the words are carefully chosen, and that the reference is to particular sacrifices 'offered by the nation or its leaders, not by an ordinary private individual' (Kirkpatrick).

16. The address in this verse is to them 'that fear God,' and the deliverance is a private and personal one, 'for my soul.' Taken in relation to the context, it must mean that people of all nations are to listen to the story of what God has done for Israel. **For my soul** in modern phraseology has a distinctively personal and spiritual significance; here it means, for my life when it was in peril.

17. I cried, in supplication; and 'high praise was under my tongue' (R. V. marg.), as we say 'on the lips' or 'on the tip of the tongue,' ready to burst forth in acknowledgement of the answer which was sure to follow.

18, 19. Here again the marginal is better than the textual rendering. Read, 'If I had regarded iniquity . . . the Lord would not hear.' To contemplate evil in the heart while high praise of God is on the tongue is to provoke severe Divine displeasure. The Psalmist claims that he had a 'single eye' (Matt. vi. 22), one that 'looked right on' (Prov. iv. 25), that he had not

20 Blessed be God,
Which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy
from me.

67 For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments. A Psalm, a Song.

1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us,
And cause his face to shine upon us; [Selah

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a 'double heart' (Ps. xii. 2), hence God has listened to his prayer. It was the absence of 'simplicity and godly sincerity' in the religion of Israel of which the prophets had so often to complain, and which is especially condemned in Ps. l.

20. The Psalmist closes with an ascription of praise to God for His mercy, not with a complacent self-justification on the score of his own righteousness. He does not regard God's hearing of prayer as due to him for his integrity, but as an act of grace for which the Divine name should be praised. Fuller praises 'David's excellent logic,' who, 'when he should have clapped the crown on his own, puts it on God's head.' The logic of saints is not that of the schools. A man who would keep debtor and creditor account with the Almighty concerning his own virtue and the hearing of his prayers would be bankrupt from start to finish. Grace begins and continues, thanksgiving should end the history.

PSALM LXVII. A FESTAL THANKSGIVING.

A short and simple, but triumphant and comprehensive, song of praise. It blends prayer and thanksgiving, like the two preceding Psalms, and was intended for some temple festival, perhaps the Feast of Tabernacles, after a year of exceptional increase. But as in Pss. lxv and lxvi, God's hand is traced in the nation's history, as well as in the processes of nature, and He is praised as the God of the whole earth as well as of Israel. As a canticle for the church, or the nation, or the world, as a thanksgiving at harvest-time, or a prayer for foreign missions, this Psalm is almost equally appropriate, and it has been thus widely and variously used in the Christian worship for centuries. The *Deus misereatur* is never out of place.

For the words **song** and **stringed instruments** in the title, see Introd. pp. 4 and 15.

1. An echo of the priestly blessing, Numb. vi. 24, with the word *Elohim* instead of *Yahweh*, as elsewhere in this Elohistic collection. The Selah in this verse seems awkwardly placed, if it implies an interlude.

That thy way may be known upon earth, 2
Thy saving health among all nations.
Let the peoples praise thee, O God; 3
Let all the peoples praise thee.
O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: 4
For thou shalt judge the peoples with equity,
And govern the nations upon earth. [Selah
Let the peoples praise thee, O God; 5
Let all the peoples praise thee.
The earth hath yielded her increase: 6

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2. The idea meets us again which has been so prominent in Pss. lxv and lxvi, that there is a close connexion between God's work for His own people and the conversion of the nations at large to His service. They have but to be made acquainted with what He has done for Israel and they will learn to trust Him for themselves. In a fuller sense than the Psalmist imagined this has come to pass.

By **way** is meant the Divine purpose and its accomplishment in history. **Saving health** is an archaism for salvation, but the phrase is one which all would be loth to lose, and it precisely expresses what 'all nations' need.

3, 4. Commentators differ as to the tenses here and elsewhere in the Psalm. Some understand them as presents, some as futures, whilst others—the majority and the best—interpret them as wishes or prayers throughout. In these two verses there can be little doubt that this is the meaning.

The nations are summoned to give thanks; for if they will render their allegiance to the God of Israel they shall gladly prove the equity and excellence of the Divine government. That 'leading' which has been so marked in the history of the chosen people shall be granted as a boon to all.

5. Refrain as in verse 3, somewhat irregularly as it may seem, but aptly placed.

6, 7. In these closing verses R. V. changes the rendering of the tenses from optatives to futures. We think that the instinct which leads us to look for a confident expression of faith and hope before the Psalm closes is right. The only question is where the change should come. Kirkpatrick suggests that it might begin in verse 5, and would certainly effect it in verses 6 and 7. The Revisers seem to have hit the mark best. The refrain should be kept as a prayer: then comes the glad acknowledgement of a fruitful harvest, in itself a token of Divine favour—**the earth hath yielded her**

God, even our own God, shall bless us.
7 God shall bless us;
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

68 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David, a Song.

1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered;

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increase; and, lastly, the Psalmist breaks forth in assured prophecy that God's blessing will continue to abide upon His own people, and in and through them the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of God.

Psalm LXVIII. A Hymn of Victory.

One of the greatest of the Psalms, notable alike for magnificence of conception and sustained vigour in the presentment of lofty thought. The subject is God as the Leader of the hosts of His people marching through conflict to victory, and passing to the sanctuary in triumphal procession. All commentators are agreed in recognizing the grandeur of the Psalm and the splendour of its diction. Hupfeld, who is not given to superlatives, describes it as 'a perfect hymn, the most glowing, the most spirited, and the most powerful which exists in the whole Psalter.' But all are equally convinced of its difficulty. Delitzsch quotes from an Italian Jewish poet, a contemporary of Dante, who describes all the commentators on the Psalms as gathered in Paradise before King David to contend for a prize, 'When he assigned them all the 68th Psalm as their task, what a thick vapour arose!' Christian interpreters have not been more successful. The dates assigned to the Psalm spread over wellnigh a thousand years, and include authors and occasions the most diverse. A composition which has been assigned by scholarly and able critics alike to the time of David, of Jehoshaphat, and of Hezekiah, to the Return from Captivity, to the age of Nehemiah, the early Greek period, and the war between Ptolemy Philometor and Alexander Balas, B.C. 146, cannot be easy to place and characterize. Cheyne says, 'Many psalms, no doubt, can be fairly well understood without fixing their date, but certainly not the 68th.' If this be true—which we do not admit—the grandest of the Psalms is also unintelligible.

The chief reasons for this difficulty of interpretation and diversity of view are the variety and comprehensiveness of the allusions and quotations, and the obscurity of certain parts of the text. It is studded with parallel passages and phrases which bring it into relation with other Scriptures—'all that is most glorious in the literature of the days of old is concentrated in it'—

Let them also that hate him flee before him.

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yet there is nothing suggestive of the copyist, it is full of verve, fire, and vigour. The language in places is obscure through its very energy, and modern critics, who indulge freely in the luxury of textual emendation, intersperse numerous asterisks in their renderings of this Psalm to indicate that in their view the text is hopeless. Again, whilst characteristics of this kind usually mark an early date, some words found in the Psalm with their Aramaic affinities point to a comparatively late period.

Nevertheless, if we are not too exacting, it will be found quite possible to understand, enjoy, and spiritually to appreciate this noble Psalm. Its general meaning is clear, some obscurities of detail may be removed, within certain limits its date may probably be fixed, while the main lessons concerning God, His ways, His purposes, His people, and His glory, which are here embodied in lofty poetry, shine clear as stars in the nightly Eastern sky.

It seems to us impossible to maintain the theory of Davidic authorship. True, the reign of David would furnish most suitable occasions for its use, whether the removal of the ark to Zion, or one of the illustrious victories of the period, whilst the mention of the tribes Benjamin and Judah, Zabulon and Naphtali, would be more appropriate then than at any later period. But the religious ideas, some detailed expressions, and the general literary affinities of the Psalm point to a much later date. On the other hand, the triumphant tone of the Psalm and its confident anticipations of the future make it very unlikely that it was written so late as the time of the Ptolemies, in the second century B.C.—a date improbable also on other grounds. There remain the period of the later monarchy and a time soon after the Exile. No suitable occasion presents itself in the time of Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah. The allusions are not to Moab and Edom on the one hand, nor to Assyria on the other, whilst the numerous parallels with the second Isaiah would not be sufficiently accounted for.

We agree, therefore, with some of the best modern critics in understanding the Psalm as an outburst of thanksgiving and hope awakened in the minds of the Jews by what seemed to many of them the new birth of the nation in the Return from Captivity. That such ideas and hopes prevailed is certain, Ps. cxviii and many of the 'Pilgrim' group abundantly testify to this. If those hopes were only in part fulfilled, and the aspirations of the Psalm very imperfectly realized, such disappointments shadowed the whole history of Israel. The date suggested would account for the close parallels between the Psalm and Isa. xl–lxvi, which form a fundamental factor in the literary problem. The chief objections to this view are removed if we understand the Psalm as ideal, 2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away:

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retrospective, and prospective, treating the whole history of the nation from a prophetic standpoint. It does not follow, because four tribes are named, that they existed distinct in the Psalmist's time; nor, because Egypt is alluded to as an enemy, that war with Egypt was actually going on. Isaiah shows how 'Rahab' had come to stand as a typical name for the world-powers oppressing Israel, and the mention of the **temple at Jerusalem** in verse 29 is clearly symbolic. The Psalmist anticipates the homage which kings are to render to Jehovah in the glorified city and sanctuary of the future.

Read thus, the Psalm is intelligible, appropriate, and effective. But whensoever composed, inspired by whatsoever reminiscences of past victory or expectations of returning prosperity, the Psalm stands as a monument of the invincible faith and inextinguishable hopes of Israel, and a prophecy of spiritual glories in part realized, in part yet to come. The outline of thought may easily be followed, and is not affected by the view taken of occasion and authorship. Verses 1–6 form an introduction in which God appears as Leader and Redeemer of His people, who are bidden to prepare the way of the Conqueror. In 7–18 past history is reviewed: the wonders of the Exodus, the journey through the wilderness, the entry into Canaan, the conquest of its inhabitants, and the choice of Zion as God's special abode, are successively described in highly poetical, but not exaggerated language. The latter half of the Psalm, 19–35, deals with the manifestations of the present and the hopes of the future. But the present is lightly touched on, and only in idealistic phrase, hence it is the less necessary to ascertain the exact epoch referred to. One stanza, 24–27, describes a festal procession to the temple, symbolic of the glory of the conquering King, and this leads on to a picture of the time when all kings and peoples shall pay Him homage, 28–31. A closing stanza, pitched in sublime key, calls upon the nations of the whole earth to praise and serve the God of Israel.

The Psalm is known in Christendom, from its opening words in Latin, as *Exsurgat Deus.* It has been used as the battle-cry of the warrior and the watchword of the down-trodden and oppressed. It has been chanted by Crusaders and Huguenots, by Covenanters and Ironsides. In the Christian Church it aptly strikes the keynote for the worship of Whit-Sunday, and alike by its general strain and by certain notable phrases which distinguish it Ps. lxviii is still fitted for use as an inspiring anthem for those who look for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

1. The Psalm begins with a quotation. With slight modifications this verse is a reproduction of the words of Moses, recorded

As wax melteth before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
But let the righteous be glad ; let them exult before God : 3
Yea, let them rejoice with gladness.
Sing unto God, sing praises to his name : 4
Cast up a high way for him that rideth through the deserts ;
His name is JAH ; and exult ye before him.

---

in Numb. x. 35, used when the ark led the children of Israel on their journeys in the wilderness. The name Jehovah, however, here becomes Elohim, and the second person imperative is changed into the optative. Hence, instead of 'Arise Jehovah' we read **Let God arise.** Some interpreters translate this and the co-ordinate tenses that follow as presents, others as futures. But the majority of versions and commentators are probably right in understanding the opening verses as a prayer that the ancient watchword of Israel on the march may receive a fresh realization.

2, 3. For the Homeric comparison of vanishing like smoke, see Hos. xiii. 3 ; and for the melting of wax, Mic. i. 4. **Wicked** and **righteous** correspond here to the heathen and Israel respectively, not to classes of persons within the nation itself.

4. Those who belong to the company of the faithful, who are entering upon this new wilderness-journey under the guidance of that presence which the Ark symbolized, are bidden to chant the praises of their great Leader and to prepare the way for His advent. **Cast up a high way :** it is impossible to miss the parallel with Isa. xl. 3, where the voice heard by the prophet's inner ear bade the exiles to prepare in the wilderness a way for Him who was about to lead them home. In Isa. lvii. 14 and lxii. 10 also the same figure is used, in each case with the addition 'Gather out the stones.' An Oriental monarch on his journeys needs such road-makers or road-menders to go before him, and unless men remove the human hindrances to God's coming He will not appear. The translation 'Extol him that rideth upon the heavens' (A. V.) follows the Targum : other ancient versions render 'Prepare the way,' LXX and Vulgate instead of 'the deserts' read 'the West.'

JAH is a shortened poetical form of Yahweh, compare the well-known word Hallelu-jah. Delitzsch notes that 'the whole cornucopia of Divine names has been poured out upon this Psalm.' *Elohim* occurs twenty-six times, *Adonai* six, while *Yahweh*, *Shaddai*, *El*, and certain combinations of these names are also found in it.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows,
Is God in his holy habitation.
6 God setteth the solitary in families:
He bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity:
But the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people,
When thou didst march through the wilderness; [Selah
8 The earth trembled,

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5. The protection of the **fatherless** and **widow** was a standing illustration of righteous and merciful government. These helpless ones were cared for by the legislation of the Book of the Covenant, Exod. xxii. 22; and when the prophet urged the people to reform their ways he bade them to 'judge the fatherless, plead for the widow,' Isa. i. 17. Hence in Ps. cxlvi. 7, 9 a proof that God 'executeth judgement for the oppressed' is that he 'upholdeth the fatherless and widow.' **Holy habitation** here means heaven, as in Deut. xxvi. 15; Isa. lxiii. 15 (where, however, a different word is used).

6. These general descriptions of God's character and methods are intended to prepare the way for the subject proper of the Psalm. An avant-courier or herald declares the virtues and excellences of the coming King.

Render, 'maketh the solitary to dwell in a home' (see R. V. marg.). The deliverance of prisoners (Ps. cxlvi. 7) has been characteristic of Israel's God from the time of the Exodus onwards, and is now about to receive new illustration. The word **rebellious** is understood by some to refer to heathen opponents; others apply it to stubborn Israelites, who would not believe God's word, and did not learn the lessons of exile (Isa. lxv. 2); but it is better to take the statement generally as a characteristic of the Divine moral government, without any specific reference.

7. Again a quotation, with some variations of phraseology: in this instance from the song of Deborah, Judges v. 4, 5. The chief changes consist in the omission of the names Seir and Edom, and, as before, the substitution of Elohim for Jehovah.

It is the object of the Psalmist in this stanza to describe the beginning of God's march to victory, as seen in the history of Israel. He goes back to the exodus from Egypt and borrows Deborah's striking words to prove that the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness were but the beginning of a journey under the immediate leadership of God.

8. Here, as in Ps. xviii, Hab. iii, and elsewhere, storm and

The heavens also dropped at the presence of God:
Even yon Sinai *trembled* at the presence of God, the God
  of Israel.
Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, 9
Thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.
Thy congregation dwelt therein: 10
Thou, O God, didst prepare of thy goodness for the poor.
The Lord giveth the word: 11

---

earthquake are the tokens of the Divine presence. Compare especially the description of the scene at the giving of the law in Exod. xix. **Yon Sinai:** the demonstrative pronoun is very expressive; it was at that mountain that the Divine manifestation reached its climax. R. V. rightly supplies the verb **trembled** from the first line. The description of the last line loses force from the change of Jehovah to Elohim **the God of Israel.**

9. Render, 'With a bountiful rain, O God, Thou didst besprinkle thine inheritance, and when it was weary Thou didst refresh it.' The rain has been understood of the dropping of the manna (compare Exod. xvi. 4, 'I will rain bread from heaven for you'), of the showers of quails in the wilderness, and again of the preparation of the well-watered land of Canaan to be Israel's home after their wanderings. Neither of these explanations is quite satisfactory. Israel has not yet arrived at Canaan; it is the provision in the wilderness which is being described, and **rain** is best understood of all the manifold blessings received during the journeys of forty years.

10. Congregation, marg. 'troop,' has been variously understood. The word in the Hebrew is ambiguous, like our word 'creatures.' But, though unusual, it may be applied here to Israel as God's living family, needing his care and described in the second line as the **poor,** or the 'afflicted.'

A difficulty arises over the word **therein,** for which no antecedent appears to be expressed. It may be understood (1) of the land of Canaan, as too well-known to need special designation; (2) of the 'inheritance,' i. e. the wilderness, as the temporary dwelling-place of God's people. But it seems best (3) to understand 'inheritance' of the people, i. e. the 'congregation of Israel,' and the word 'therein' will find an antecedent in the sense though not in the grammar. It will then refer generally to that sojourn in the wilderness which is the subject of the whole stanza.

11. A graphic and striking transition to the next stage in God's march to victory. The conquest of Canaan as the Land of

The women that publish the tidings are a great host.
12 Kings of armies flee, they flee:
And she that tarrieth at home divideth the spoil.
13 Will ye lie among the sheepfolds,
As the wings of a dove covered with silver,
And her pinions with yellow gold?

Promise is dealt with in stanza 11–14. R. V. is right in rendering the verb by historic presents, the Lord **giveth,** they **flee,** &c. It is enough for God to give the word: He speaketh, and it is done. The foe and the battle are not described, the next sound that we hear is the song of the women celebrating the victory. For examples of this compare Miriam's song with the timbrel in Exod. xv. 20, Deborah's song in Judges v, and the rejoicings of the women over David's slaughter of Goliath in 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7.

12. This verse and the two that follow are understood by some commentators as extracts from old traditional war-songs, such as that of Deborah. This theory would help to explain the obscurity of verses 13 and 14, and verse 12 might well form part of such a paean. But it is simpler to understand it as part of the Psalmist's own graphic word-painting. This is the only case in which *tsebaoth*, the word here translated **armies,** and used in the title 'Jehovah of hosts,' is applied to heathen forces. The reference is to the Kings of Canaan mentioned in Judges v. 19, and the division of the spoil is vividly described in verse 30.

13. The difficulty of this verse arises from its brevity and the use of ellipsis. The phrase of A. V. 'lien among the pots' points to Israel's servitude in Egypt, which is supposed to be contrasted with the brightness and happiness of their sojourn in the Promised Land. But it is now generally agreed that it should be rendered **lie among the sheepfolds,** with an allusion to Reuben's 'sitting among the sheepfolds to listen to the piping of the flocks' in Judges v. 16. The figure of the dove basking in the sunshine, with the light upon her wings gleaming like gold and silver, is also generally understood as describing a delightful condition of peace and prosperity. But the question is, how to fit in these references with the context. R. V. understands this verse to contain an indignant remonstrance, like that of Deborah against Reuben, **will ye lie** in such delicious but inglorious ease enjoying the brilliant sunshine of prosperity, instead of coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty? But such a reproof, richly deserved in Judges v, seems here uncalled for and meaningless. Kirkpatrick renders, 'Though ye may lie,' understanding the connexion of thought to be, that though some Israelites might be

When the Almighty scattered kings therein, 14
It was as when it snoweth in Zalmon.
A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; 15
An high mountain is the mountain of Bashan.

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careless and slothful, *yet* the dove's wings are covered with silver, &c., i. e. God gives the blessings of prosperity in spite of man's unfaithfulness.

Better, in our judgement, is the rendering of R. V. marg. 'When ye lie among the sheepfolds, It is as the wings,' &c., i. e. after the victories described in verse 12 have been gained, idyllic prosperity may be enjoyed, life is tranquil, and the colours of the landscape brilliant. 'Israel is God's turtle-dove, and accordingly the new prosperity is compared to the play of colour on the wings of a dove basking in the sunshine,' Delitzsch.

14. Another obscure verse, probably containing allusions intelligible to contemporaries, but not to us. The name *Shaddai*, **Almighty**, rare in the Psalter, perhaps points to this verse being a fragment of an early poem.

therein means in the land of Canaan, but this word may also go to show that the line is torn from another context.

It was as when **it snoweth in Zalmon.** R. V. has supplied certain words to indicate that a simile is intended. The comparison may be to the whitening of many bones upon the plains, or to the scattering of all kinds of equipments abandoned in hurried flight, or to the rush of troops and leaders in headlong confusion, like the whirling of snowflakes in a storm. The marginal rendering, 'It snowed in Zalmon,' implies that a literal storm took place, like the hailstorm at Beth-horon recorded in Joshua x. 11, which helped to complete the rout. This, however, is prosaic; the explanation of R. V. text is much to be preferred, and is adopted here without a discussion of the scores of other interpretations that have been given to the verse, the enumeration of which would only perplex the reader.

Zalmon is the name of a wooded hill near Shechem, see Judges ix. 48. The word means 'dark'—compare Montenegro, Schwarzwald, and the Black Mountains of Wales—and if this particular mountain be intended, it is perhaps mentioned as furnishing a striking background for the snow-scene.

15. The Psalmist proceeds to describe the capital of the newly-conquered land, the place where God deigned to fix His abode. It was not such a spot as might have been expected, Mount Hermon, for instance, that glorious 'mountain of summits' (R. V. marg.), with its three peaks more than 9,000 feet high, which in its majesty looks down upon Bashan and dominates the whole

16 Why look ye askance, ye high mountains,
At the mountain which God hath desired for his abode?
Yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.
17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands:
The Lord is among them, *as in* Sinai, in the sanctuary.
18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led *thy* captivity captive;

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north of Palestine. The legends of many countries locate the abode of the gods among the mountains, Olympus, for example, but Jehovah has chosen a comparatively insignificant hill for His dwelling-place.

16. The loftier mountains are represented as looking enviously upon the humble Zion, the place of which God said, 'This is my resting-place for ever: Here will I dwell; for I have desired it,' Ps. cxxxii. 14. The rendering of A. V. 'Why leap ye?' P. B. V. 'Why hop ye so, ye high hills?' follows the Targum, which is almost certainly in error. The word occurs only here, but other ancient versions have for the most part caught the right meaning, 'Why look ye jealously?'

17. The glory of the Conqueror in His triumphal entry is described. His chariots are 'myriad-fold': *lit.* 'two myriads,' but this does not mean, as in R. V., exactly 20,000, the dual being used distributively = 'reckoned by myriads.' The next clause, **even thousands upon thousands,** repeats the idea in another form. A. V. again follows the Targum in its mention of 'angels,' but with a reminiscence of the 'myriads of holy ones' in Deut. xxiii. 2; but there is no foundation for this in the Hebrew.

The last clause of the verse is somewhat difficult. The device of A. V. and R. V., adding the words 'as in' is permissible, but it mars the simplicity of the original which runs, **The Lord is among them, Sinai is in the sanctuary!** (See marg.). Perowne and others slightly alter the text and read 'is come from Sinai into the sanctuary,' but the emendation is tame and unnecessary. The meaning is that all the sacredness of Sinai, and more, is to be found in this holy place, where God has taken up, not a temporary halting-place as at Sinai, but a permanent abode, to dwell in it for ever.

18. The climax of the Conqueror's glory. He takes His place upon the throne and receives homage on all hands. In the second clause render, 'Thou hast led captive thy captives': the abstract word 'captivity' does not give the meaning. These prisoners

Thou hast received gifts among men,
Yea, *among* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might
dwell *with them.*

Blessed be the Lord, who daily beareth our burden, 19
Even the God who is our salvation. [Selah
God is unto us a God of deliverances; 20
And unto JEHOVAH the Lord belong the issues from death.

---

are the heathen enemies of Israel and of God; the ascending on high is metaphorical, and may either represent God, as it were, returning to heaven, or the winding of the triumphal procession up the hill of Zion.

The Victor receives gifts [from] **among men,** not 'for men,' A. V. All are subject to His sway and pay tribute, even **the rebellious** heathen show this mark of submission, 'that Jah Elohim might dwell there,' i. e. undisturbed, His power unquestioned, in Zion.

St. Paul in Eph. iv. 8 uses this passage, not quoting it exactly, but adapting it for his purpose—as some think, following a current Rabbinical paraphrase in the clause 'gave gifts unto men.' In N. T. Christ is the conqueror who, after His ascension, did not so much exact homage as scatter largesse among His subjects, His gifts being the equipment of His Church with faithful officers and leaders. The apostle preserves and heightens the significance and spirit of the Psalmist's utterance while departing from its literal phraseology.

19. The review of the past is over. God is enthroned in Zion, and the Psalmist breaks forth in praise to Him for what He is and will be to His people.

The rendering of A. V. 'loadeth with benefits' does not give the meaning, which is, as R. V. text gives it, 'who daily beareth for us' (our burden), or as some ancient versions and modern expositors render it, 'who daily beareth us!' Compare, for the word, Isa. xlvi. 3, 4, also for the thought, Ps. xxviii. 9 'bear them up for ever,' and Isa. lxiii. 9. To load with benefits is gracious; to bear another's burden implies closer sympathy; but to bear and carry the heavy-laden and suffering themselves is Divine!

20, 21. Two names of God are joined in the second line. The word **God** is printed in A. V. in capitals, to show that the sacred name 'Jehovah' should be read. Israel at the time of the Psalmist's writing needed a deliverer who could command **the issues** or 'means of escape from death.' They were in danger from cruel foes whom God would punish in their wickedness, however

21 But God shall smite through the head of his enemies,
The hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his guiltiness.
22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan,
I will bring *them* again from the depths of the sea:
23 That thou mayest dip thy foot in blood,
That the tongue of thy dogs may have its portion from *thine* enemies.
24 They have seen thy goings, O God,
Even the goings of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.
25 The singers went before, the minstrels followed after,
In the midst of the damsels playing with timbrels.
26 Bless ye God in the congregations,

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proud their strength. This is the meaning of what is to us a curious phrase, **the hairy scalp of such an one,** &c. An allusion to the long flowing hair in which warriors delighted as a mark of strength is found in Deut. xxxii. 42, 'the hairy head of the enemy,' R. V. marg.

22, 23. The object of the verb **bring again** is not, as the older interpreters supposed, God's own people, but their enemies. They might hide among the basaltic rocks and fastnesses of Bashan, they might plunge into the very depths of the sea, but they should not escape condign punishment. The form in which this punishment is to be inflicted, revolting as it is to our ideas, was sadly familiar in early times, and the phraseology 'the dogs shall lick the blood of their slain' was proverbial for righteous vengeance. See Ps. lviii. 10.

24. A festal procession to the temple is described in 24-27. But it is not to be confused with the going up of the King in verse 17. He is enthroned, and has celebrated his victory over the enemy, and now comes the rejoicing of the people, who solemnly present their thanksgivings in the sanctuary. 'Israel's festival of victory is regarded as a triumphal procession of God Himself,' Delitzsch. 'They have seen' is to be understood impersonally; the sacred splendour has been visible to all eyes.

25. In a Psalm so full of allusions to other Scriptures we may understand this verse as intentionally presenting a parallel to Exod. xv. 20, in which Miriam and the women celebrated the deliverance at the Red Sea with timbrels and dances.

26. Bless ye God, &c., the words of the hymn sung, 'Ye that are **of the fountain of Israel':** i. e. who derive your birth from

Even the Lord, *ye that are* of the fountain of Israel.
There is little Benjamin their ruler, 27
The princes of Judah *and* their council,
The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

Thy God hath commanded thy strength: 28
Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.
Because of thy temple at Jerusalem 29
Kings shall bring presents unto thee.

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the patriarch; compare Isa. xlviii. 1, 'which are come forth out of the waters of Judah.' Some understand Zion, or the temple, to be the 'fountain' in question. The P. B. V. renders 'from the ground of the heart,' a suggestive phrase which has influenced religious literature, but which is quite foreign to the meaning. It is based on the meaning of fountain as origin or ultimate source, the words 'of the heart' being supplied.

27. Four tribes take part in the procession; Benjamin and Judah represent the south, and Zebulun and Naphtali—so honourably prominent in the song of Deborah which this Psalmist is continually recalling—stand for the northern tribes. They are not chosen as the strongest and most influential, but as being specially exposed to invasion and brave in repelling it. Compare Isa. ix. 1, where the region named after these tribes is first 'brought into contempt' then 'made glorious.'

little Benjamin, the youngest son and the smallest tribe, **their ruler** furnishing the first king, Saul. **Their council** or 'company': *lit.* 'crowd,' since Judah was the largest or most numerous tribe.

28. Better, with all the ancient versions, 'O God command Thy strength; Be strong, O God, Thou that hast wrought for us' (R. V. marg.). This avoids the awkward interpolation of an address to Israel. The Psalmist recognizes the Divine might and its manifestation in the past, praying that again it may be put forth for present needs.

29. The first clause is difficult. The opening preposition properly means 'from,' not **because of,** and one explanation is to attach the clause 'from Thy temple' to the preceding verse (R. V. marg.). But this disturbs the balance of clauses and implies an unusual meaning for the preposition **at,** properly 'over'; it would have to be translated 'up to Jerusalem' (Perowne). Another explanation (Cheyne) draws a distinction between the holy place, which the kings might enter and *from* which they

30 Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds,
The multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the peoples,
Trampling under foot the pieces of silver;
He hath scattered the peoples that delight in war.
31 Princes shall come out of Egypt;
Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands unto God.
32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth;
O sing praises unto the Lord; [Selah
33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which are of old;
Lo, he uttereth his voice, *and that* a mighty voice.

---

offer presents. No translation is free from a slight awkwardness, but the general meaning is clear.

30. wild beast of the reeds: the hippopotamus, symbolically representing Egypt, the behemoth of Job xl. 15, 21. A. V. 'the company of spearmen' follows certain Jewish interpreters, but the more correct translation is given in the image.

bulls . . . calves: the leaders of the nations with their followers. **Trampling under foot the pieces of silver** means that God in rebuking these haughty foes should disdain to accept the offerings they bring to avert His wrath. The translation of A. V. and R. V. marg. 'Every one submitting himself,' &c., makes better sense, but is grammatically doubtful. Baethgen, Cheyne, and others abandon the text as corrupt, and it is useless here to discuss emendations, since there is none obvious or generally accepted.

In the last line A. V., with some ancient versions, reads 'scatter Thou'; so R. V. marg., and this rendering is to be preferred. R. V. text **He hath scattered** must be understood as a confident anticipation of what God will do.

31. Princes: a peculiar word found here only. A kindred word in lxxviii. 31 means 'fat ones'; we should say 'great ones,' magnates, dignitaries.

Ethiopia, Heb. 'Cush,' P. B. V. 'the Morians' land,' often stands in O. T. for distant and little-known peoples. 'When Cush submits, the world is won.'

32. The thoughts of the Psalm are now gathered up in a closing stanza. All the nations of the earth are summoned to join in praising the God whose triumph has been described at length.

33. In verse 4 God rides through the deserts, now He is supreme

Ascribe ye strength unto God: 34
His excellency is over Israel,
And his strength is in the skies.
O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places: 35
The God of Israel, he giveth strength and power unto
his people.
Blessed be God.

For the Chief Musician; set to Shoshannim. *A Psalm* of David. **69**

Save me, O God; 1

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in the eternal heavens. His mighty voice has spoken, all peoples cannot choose but hear.

34. Let them then acknowledge two things—God's special goodness to Israel, and his dominion in heaven and earth.

35. A final ascription of praise on the part of the Psalmist. Such a Psalm should end with a doxology. Render:—

'Terrible art Thou, O God, from Thy sanctuary, Thou God of
Israel:
He it is who giveth strength and abundance of might to His
people.
Blessed be God!'

PSALM LXIX. PRAYER OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF GOD.

After a paean, a plaintive cry. The writer of this Psalm is in unusually deep affliction, and it is because of his fidelity to truth and to God that he suffers. Like Ps. xxii, this is a passion-Psalm; as in it, trouble changes into triumph and prayer to praise. The two Psalms breathe in several respects the spirit of the N. T., and are often quoted both in Gospels and Epistles. But the differences between the Old Covenant and the New are no less manifest, and these must not be ignored or slighted in exposition.

It is impossible to determine date and authorship, but it is easier than usual to form probable conjectures, and interpreters are for once fairly well agreed in their judgement. The period which best represents the conditions is that of Jeremiah, and some leading critics would ascribe the Psalm to the prophet himself. Davidic authorship is out of the question: even Delitzsch says that in Pss. xl and lxix Jeremiah 'poured forth his emotions in the form of Davidic Psalms, and perhaps also gave them Davidic titles.' The language of the Psalm presents several detailed coincidences with that of Jeremiah, which are pointed out in the notes. The

For the waters are come in unto my soul.
2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing:
I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

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general conditions of Psalmist and prophet are very similar, notably that each is suffering as martyr or confessor, being misunderstood and misrepresented, not only by fellow countrymen, but by his nearest friends. Compare especially Jer. xi, xv, xvii, xx. Deep and tender feeling characterizes both writers, both exhibit wounded but invincible faith, both anticipate spiritual benefit to result to the nation and the individual from the period of sharp trial through which they are passing. We may say with Kirkpatrick, 'If Jeremiah was not the author, it must have been some prophet of a kindred temper of mind under very similar circumstances.' The conditions are quite fairly met if we suppose the writer to have been a later Psalmist, during or after the Exile, who was imbued with the spirit and familiar with the writings of his great predecessor. Jeremiah was one of the finest and most sorely tried spirits among all the heroes of the O. T. Caricatured as he was in his lifetime, and by later tradition known as 'the weeping prophet,' a mere utterer of 'jeremiads,' this saint and martyr was a man as strong as he was sensitive, as brave as he was tender. Perhaps it may truly be said that Jeremiah, in spite of his faults, was one of the most Christ-like of all the servants of God under the Old Covenant. This Psalm should be read throughout with Jeremiah in mind; whether he wrote it or not, his history gives the key to its meaning.

The Psalm may be divided into five parts. In the first stanza, verses 1–6, the Psalmist pleads his sad case; in 7–12 he describes its cause and the cruel conduct of those who ought to have helped him; in 13–18 he repeats his earlier plea in stronger language. Turning once again to his persecutors, his indignation burns more fiercely against them, and he breathes dire and bitter imprecations upon them 19–28; whilst in the closing stanza he anticipates the deliverance for the afflicted which God will accomplish and the glory to His holy name which will accrue when His salvation fully appears, 29–36.

For the title **set to Shoshannim,** i. e. 'the tune of the Lilies,' see Introd. p. 16, and compare Ps. xlv.

1. For water-floods as a symbol of danger, see Pss. xviii. 16, xxxii. 6; **come in unto my soul** means threaten my very life.

2. deep mire: *lit.* 'mud of the gulf' or abyss. In time of flood there are two dangers, one of sinking into morass or quicksand, the other of being swept away by the strong current of water. The Psalmist mentions both of these perils. It would be misleading to take the phrase literally and to refer it to that dungeon or pit

I am weary with my crying; my throat is dried: 3
Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.
They that hate me without a cause are more than the 4
hairs of mine head:
They that would cut me off, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty:
Then I restored that which I took not away.
O God, thou knowest my foolishness; 5
And my sins are not hid from thee.
Let not them that wait on thee be ashamed through me, 6
O Lord God of hosts:
Let not those that seek thee be brought to dishonour
through me, O God of Israel.
Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; 7
Shame hath covered my face.
I am become a stranger unto my brethren, 8
And an alien unto my mother's children.

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of Malchijah, in which Jeremiah was imprisoned and sank into the mire, Jer. xxxviii. 6. The figure of the text pictures a wider destruction than the foul mud at the bottom of a pit.

3. The exhaustion, the parching of the throat, the failure of sight through grief and weeping, are mentioned in other Psalms, see vi. 6, 7, xxii. 15, xxxviii. 10, cxix. 82, &c.

4. His foes are many and strong. They treated the Psalmist as the wolf accused the lamb in the fable; the last line should be rendered, 'What I never took away, that I had to restore.' The phrase is to be understood rather proverbially than literally of one who was slandered as well as oppressed, and robbed under the pretext of making him restore ill-gotten gains.

5. My foolishness . . . my sins: such confession is not always made by the Psalmists in their sufferings; sometimes they confidently plead their own integrity. Jeremiah, however, constantly casts himself upon the omniscience of God, and prays that the All-knowing and All-pitying will help him, Jer. xv. 15; xvii. 16, &c.

6, 7. However unworthy the Psalmist may be, his cause is bound up with that of God's people and of God Himself. It is for his Master's sake that he has borne reproach, and he pleads that God for His own sake will deliver him.

8. By the innermost circle of friends and family he has been

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;
And the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me.
10 When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting,
That was to my reproach.
11 When I made sackcloth my clothing,
I became a proverb unto them.
12 They that sit in the gate talk of me;
And *I am* the song of the drunkards.
13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time:
O God, in the multitude of thy mercy,

---

betrayed and abandoned. 'My own mother's children' are of closer kin than **my brethren,** who may be only the sons of the same father, or more distantly related.

9. Jeremiah is a striking example of the complete identification of the servant of God with the cause of God, and of the consuming desire which burns away the very life of the true devotee—whom men call a fanatic. See Jer. xx. 9. **Thine house** may refer literally to the temple and its threatened profanation, or to the church-nation generally, as in Jer. xi. 15, xii. 7.

But for the perfect illustration of these words we must turn to N. T. The first half of this verse is quoted in John ii. 17, the second half in Rom. xv. 3: Christ's disciples during His lifetime, and Paul after His death, alike found in this verse an apt description of the spirit in which the Son of Man and Son of God did and suffered the Father's will.

10–12. An illustration of the way in which these bitter reproaches for righteousness' sake tortured the tender spirit of the sufferer. Overwhelmed with shame and sorrow for the nation's sins, he publicly fasted and mourned. This action of his and its cause were alike the subject of mockery, and further discredit was brought upon religion, as the drunkards blasphemed the name of God in making sport of His servant.

In the gate, the place of public concourse; they who sit there are the idle loafers, 'men of the market place,' described in Acts xvii. 5 as 'vile fellows of the rabble.' For the habitual drunkards of the time see Isa. v. 11, 12.

13. This Abdiel, faithful among the faithless, has, however, a sure refuge. Compare Ps. civ. 9, 'But I give myself unto prayer,' *lit.* 'I am prayer.' The clause **In an acceptable time, or**

Answer me in the truth of thy salvation.
Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: 14
Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of
the deep waters.
Let not the waterflood overwhelm me, 15
Neither let the deep swallow me up;
And let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.
Answer me, O LORD; for thy loving-kindness is good: 16
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies turn
thou unto me.
And hide not thy face from thy servant; 17
For I am in distress; answer me speedily.
Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: 18
Ransom me because of mine enemies.
Thou knowest my reproach, and my shame, and my 19
dishonour:
Mine adversaries are all before thee.

'in a time of favour,' corresponds with **in the multitude of thy mercy,** and a plea lurks in the heart of each. The last clause, 'with the truth of thy salvation,' might be paraphrased 'by the exercise of that saving power which Thou wilt faithfully put forth in Thine own time.'

14, 15. Prayer to be delivered from the evils mentioned in verse 2, with the addition **let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.** Some commentators explain this of the mouth of a well; if the orifice be closed, a man at the bottom would be literally buried alive. It is better, however, to understand the word generally as = the grave, or 'pit of destruction,' Ps. lv. 23.

16-18. Seven petitions based substantially on three pleas. (1) Thou art so good, so full of lovingkindness: (2) I thy servant am in such sore trouble, Thou canst not desert me: (3) My enemies will triumph if my prayer is unanswered, and the sacred Name will be correspondingly dishonoured. Thus does the suppliant know how to gather arguments from the nature of God, from his own straits, and from the conditions of life around him.

19. He returns to the theme of his woes with deepened feeling, which increases as this stanza proceeds. But it is to plead them as already lying in the very spirit of God—**Thou knowest!**

20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of
heaviness:
And I looked for some to take pity, but there was none;
And for comforters, but I found none.
21 They gave me also gall for my meat;
And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
22 Let their table before them become a snare;
And when they are in peace, *let it become* a trap.
23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not;
And make their loins continually to shake.
24 Pour out thine indignation upon them,

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20. Almost the words of Jeremiah. Compare xxiii. 9, where the prophet complains 'my heart is broken,' and enlarges on the prevalent wickedness which has made his brain giddy, as well as his heart sore.

21. A proverbial expression to describe the adding of insult to injury. **Gall**—perhaps the poppy—a bitter and poisonous plant for his food, **vinegar**—sour and unwholesome wine—to drink. That is, the sufferings of the hungry and thirsty are treated with mockery, the original cruelty is multiplied tenfold by the scorn which pours poison into the wound.

This verse is alluded to in the narratives of the sufferings of Christ upon the cross, see Matt. xxvii. 34 and John xix. 28. The 'fulfilment' of Scripture referred to must not be understood as the accomplishment of a direct prophecy, nor even as the correspondence of a perfect type, but rather as the complete realization of the spirit, and to some extent the details, of this Psalm in the case of a Perfect and Spotless Sufferer.

22. Those who would too closely press the typical relation between the Psalmist and our Lord must be arrested by this verse. The imprecations which extend to the end of verse 28 are amongst the darkest and fiercest in the Psalter. The gulf which separates these verses from 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do' marks the impassable limits of typology.

The form of imprecation in this verse is suggested by the figures of 21. May they be seized in the midst of their unhallowed enjoyments, and their very security prove their ruin? St. Paul quotes this and the next verse in Rom. xi. 9, mainly following the LXX.

23. The darkening of the eyes and trembling of the limbs are signs of weakness, perhaps paralysis.

24, 25. The Divine wrath is to overtake their families as well

And let the fierceness of thine anger overtake them.
Let their habitation be desolate; 25
Let none dwell in their tents.
For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; 26
And they tell of the sorrow of those whom thou hast wounded.
Add iniquity unto their iniquity: 27
And let them not come into thy righteousness.
Let them be blotted out of the book of life, 28
And not be written with the righteous.
But I am poor and sorrowful: 29
Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

---

as themselves. Modern mercy spares as far as possible the helpless dependents of a criminal; the Oriental thinks of punishment as incomplete if it does not involve the household. St. Peter quotes this verse in reference to Judas, Acts i. 20, following the LXX, but adapting the passage for his own purpose.

26. The ground of all these terrible maledictions is that these evil men were not simply cruel to a brother-man, but took sides against God, would not recognize His chastening hand, but turned as it were good into evil by maltreating the suffering servant of God. Compare Isa. liii. 4. LXX reads 'they add to the sorrow of him whom Thou hast smitten,' this was the worst part of the offence.

27, 28. The climax of imprecation. **The book of life,** better 'the book of the living' (marg.), must not be understood in the N. T. sense with reference to a future state, Rev. xx. 12. The most instructive parallels are Isa. iv. 3, 'written among the living in Jerusalem.' and Dan. xii. 1. Moses also refers to 'the book which thou hast written.' The idea is that of a register of the true citizens in the city of God, and the names of these men are not to be found enrolled in it. Death and deprivation of all the privileges of Israelites are implied in this curse, and the force of imprecation at the time could go no further. The expedients which have been devised for softening the meaning of these awful curses must, we fear, be pronounced vain. The dark words stand; their relation to the ethics and theology of the O. T. is discussed in the Introduction to vol. ii of this work.

29. That the Psalmist could breathe such dire prayers with a good conscience is clear from this and the following verses. With

30 I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify him with thanksgiving.
31 And it shall please the LORD better than an ox,
Or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.
32 The meek have seen it, and are glad:
Ye that seek after God, let your heart live.
33 For the LORD heareth the needy,
And despiseth not his prisoners.
34 Let heaven and earth praise him,
The seas, and every thing that moveth therein.
35 For God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah;
And they shall abide there, and have it in possession.
36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it;
And they that love his name shall dwell therein.

---

a certain complacency he contemplates his own position, though he is 'afflicted and in pain.' He is as confident that God will deliver him as he is that the evil-doers shall be terribly punished.

30, 31. In the same breath with his imprecations upon his enemies he offers thanksgiving to God, assured that such spiritual sacrifice will be well-pleasing to Him. The reference to **horns and hoofs** of the bullock shows that the animal is fit for sacrifice—possessing horns and cleaving the hoof—of full age, and belonging to the class accounted 'clean,' Lev. xi.

32, 33. Render:—

'When the meek see this, they are glad;
Ye that seek after God, let your heart revive.'

The Psalmist holds that there are two sides in the great world-conflict—on the one hand are ranged the rich and powerful and influential wicked, on the other are the poor and afflicted righteous and—Jehovah. Every deliverance effected by God for one of the latter class puts heart into all the rest.

34–36. The plaintive strain is now entirely lost in rejoicing. The whole universe is to join in a chorus of praise, because in the little corner of the world known as Jerusalem the God of Israel restores and comforts His faithful people. The phrase 'will rebuild the cities of Judah' is one mark of date making the period of Jeremiah the most probable for this Psalm. Cf. Jer. xxxiii. 10, xxxiv. 7. There is no ground for supposing these verses to be a liturgical addition.

For the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David; to bring to remembrance. 70

Make haste, O God, to deliver me; 1
Make haste to help me, O LORD.
Let them be ashamed and confounded 2
That seek after my soul:
Let them be turned backward and brought to dishonour
That delight in my hurt.
Let them be turned back by reason of their shame 3
That say, Aha, Aha.
Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee; 4
And let such as love thy salvation say continually,
Let God be magnified.
But I am poor and needy; 5

PSALM LXX. A CRY FOR HELP.

This fragment, printed as a separate Psalm in Book II, occurs in Book I as Ps. xl. 13-17. The slight variations which distinguish this recension are noted below; for a commentary on the whole see Ps. xl, which, so far as can be judged, preserves the earlier text.

For the title **to bring to remembrance,** marg. 'to make memorial,' see Ps. xxxviii and Introduction, p. 17. The memorial *Azkara* is a technical name either for the offering of incense generally, Isa. lxvi. 3, or for a part of the meal-offering, Lev. ii. 2, or for the offering of the incense which had been placed upon the shewbread, Lev. xxiv. 7. This portion of a Psalm was perhaps detached for liturgical use, and the fact is instructive with regard to the freedom of combination and separation employed by the editors of the Psalter.

1. Make haste, **O God,** &c. We read in xl. 13, 'Be pleased to deliver me': 'make haste,' which is not in the Hebrew, is supplied from the second clause. The name Jehovah is changed to Elohim in the first line, but retained in the second.

3. Let them be turned back, in xl. 15 'Let them be desolate.' The difference in Hebrew is of one letter only, and the change may have arisen from confusion. The earlier form reads, 'that say unto me'; the omission of the words 'unto me' points to the adaptation of a personal Psalm to liturgical purposes.

4. The name Jehovah is again changed to Elohim.

5. Instead of 'The Lord thinketh upon me' in xl. 17, the

Make haste unto me, O God:
Thou art my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, make no tarrying.

71 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust:

Elohist reads, **Make haste unto me, O God.** The *I* and *me* of this verse would be understood in public worship of the nation. In the last line the usual process of this book is reversed and 'Jehovah' substituted for 'O my God,' for the sake of variety; the same reason applies to the retention of Jehovah in the second clause of verse 1.

PSALM LXXI. PRAYER OF AN AGED SAINT.

The writer of this Psalm borrows freely from earlier pleadings of a similar kind, especially in Pss. xxii, xxxi, xxxv, and xl. But he gives to his work a character of its own. A mosaic, if made up of small pieces, exhibits them combined into a pattern which they cannot possess separately, and no careful reader of this Psalm will call it 'a mere cento.'

The writer was apparently an old man, see verses 9 and 18. The form of words used, 'old and greyheaded,' 'in old age, when my strength faileth,' seems to preclude the idea that the Psalm was in the first instance a national one; for though a nation has its stages of growth, such phrases are not naturally applied to a community. Verse 20 points obviously to the nation—for the reading, see note. No advocate of the personal element in the Psalms seeks to exclude all national references, but protest is necessary when, as is the case with one school of modern critics, it is sought to exclude the personal element altogether from the religion of the Psalms.

The date is post-Exilic, see verse 20. The LXX has the curious compound title 'of David, of the sons of Jonadab and those who were first carried captive.' If this inscription be not altogether inept, it shows that in the opinion of the editors a 'Davidic' Psalm might also in some sense be a Psalm of the Exile. The reference to the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv, may point to the adaptation, or only to the use made, of an earlier composition. Jeremiah is held to have been the author by Delitzsch, Perowne, and others, and in some respects the hypothesis is probable enough; compare e. g. Jer. i. 5 with verses 5 and 6—but the language of the Psalm is too general to warrant more than conjecture.

Strophical arrangement is lacking, nor is there any close connexion of thought between the verses; verses 1-3, however,

Let me never be ashamed.
Deliver me in thy righteousness, and rescue me: 2
Bow down thine ear unto me, and save me.
Be thou to me a rock of habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: 3
Thou hast given commandment to save me;
For thou art my rock and my fortress.
Rescue me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, 4
Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: 5
Thou art my trust from my youth.
By thee have I been holden up from the womb: 6
Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels:
My praise shall be continually of thee.

---

constitute an introduction, and verse 14 marks a point of transition from past to future, from sorrow to joy, from prayer to praise.

1. The first three verses are substantially identical with xxxi. 1-3. Render, as in many other cases, 'In thee have I taken refuge.' The latter half of the verse is a prayer, well known as occurring in the last words of the Te Deum, 'Let me never be confounded.'

2. in thy righteousness is the opening clause, and should be emphasized. Only a man with a clear conscience can cast himself upon this attribute of God as a plea in prayer.

3. There is but a 'tittle' of difference in the Hebrew between **rock of habitation** and 'strong rock' (R. V. marg.). The latter is the reading of xxxi. 2, and of LXX, Targ. and other versions, here Baethgen and other critics consider that the reading **whereunto I may continually resort, Thou hast given commandment** (only three words in the Hebrew) has arisen from a corruption of two words which in xxxi. 2 are rendered 'a house of defence.' LXX and Vulg. somewhat favour this supposition; Syr. Targ. and other versions correspond to A. V. and R. V. For the variety of figures employed to describe God as a refuge, compare the opening of Ps. xviii.

5, 6. Compare Ps. xxii. 9, 10. Render in verse 6:—

> 'On Thee have I been stayed from my birth,
> From my mother's womb thou hast been my protector.'

The last word differs slightly from the parallel one in xxii. 10, but

7 I am as a wonder unto many;
But thou art my strong refuge.
8 My mouth shall be filled with thy praise,
And with thy honour all the day.
9 Cast me not off in the time of old age;
Forsake me not when my strength faileth.
10 For mine enemies speak concerning me;
And they that watch for my soul take counsel together,
11 Saying, God hath forsaken him:
Pursue and take him; for there is none to deliver.
12 O God, be not far from me:
O my God, make haste to help me.

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is translated 'protector' or 'benefactor' by LXX, Vulg., and leading interpreters.

7. a wonder—P. B. V. 'monster,' i. e. a prodigy—**unto many.** In what sense is this to be understood? Ezekiel was to be a sign to the people (xii. 6, 11) in the sense that his acts symbolized the people's fate; compare Isa. viii. 187; Zech. iii. 80. Again, punishment may be 'for a sign and for a wonder' (Deut. xxviii. 46), or as we say, a 'monument' of the justice and wrath of God. But the phrase of Isa. lii. 14, 'many were astonied at thee,' best illustrates the meaning here. The spectacle of the suffering servant of God causes all to wonder, many to fear, and the few faithful ones to revere and trust and bear to the uttermost.

8. The sufferer can understand what others think so strange. So other sufferers, as in the midst of the seven-times heated furnace, or in the stocks at Philippi, have been strengthened, and have even sung praises to God.

9. In spite of this confidence apprehension begins to creep over the Psalmist's spirit. He is old, and while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Perhaps he anticipates death, and prays that God 'will not suffer him in his last hour for any pains of death to fall from Him.' The application of these words to the nation may the more easily be made, if they are understood to have been intended first of all in a personal sense.

10, 11. Close parallels will be found in Pss. xli. lvi, &c. 'Lay wait for my soul,' i. e. watch to take my life.

12, 13. Compare Ps. xxii, xxxv, xxxviii, xl. Almost the whole of the phraseology of these verses is borrowed.

Let them be ashamed *and* consumed that are adversaries 13
to my soul;
Let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that
seek my hurt.
But I will hope continually, 14
And will praise thee yet more and more.
My mouth shall tell of thy righteousness, 15
And of thy salvation all the day;
For I know not the numbers *thereof.*
I will come with the mighty acts of the Lord GOD: 16
I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine
only.
O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; 17
And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.
Yea, even when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake 18
me not;
Until I have declared thy strength unto *the next*
generation,
Thy might to every one that is to come.
Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high; 19

14, 15. Render, 'but as for me, I will,' &c.; a strong contrast is drawn here. The Divine **righteousness is** paralleled with **salvation,** since the Psalmist holds that God is pledged to deliver His faithful servant, see verse **2. I know not the numbers thereof,** probably suggested by xl. 5.

16. I will come, i. e. into the house of God, **with the mighty acts of the Lord Jehovah,** i. e. as the subject of thanksgiving. The translation of R. V. marg. and A. V., 'I will go in the strength,' &c., does not bring out the meaning of the plural, and misses the parallel with the next clause.

17, 18. Remembrance of the past encourages the Psalmist to pray and trust for the future. He desires to be spared till he has shown God's **strength,** *lit.* 'arm,' i. e. the mighty power with which God supports and protects His people and leads them to victory, **unto** the **generation** (following); compare Ps. xlviii. 13. That this is the meaning is shown by the parallel clause 'every one that is to come.'

Thou who hast done great things,
O God, who is like unto thee?
20 Thou, which hast shewed us many and sore troubles,
Shalt quicken us again,
And shalt bring us up again from the depths of the earth.
21 Increase thou my greatness,
And turn again and comfort me.
22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery,
Even thy truth, O my God:
Unto thee will I sing praises with the harp,
O thou Holy One of Israel.
23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing praises unto thee;
And my soul, which thou hast redeemed.
24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long:

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19. who is like unto thee? Compare xxxv. 10.

20. Authorities differ as to whether the singular 'me,' or the plural **us** should be read here. The written text (*C'thibh*) of the Hebrew has **us**, but the Jews in reading (*Q'ri*) corrected into 'me' (R. V. marg.). The versions are divided in the second and third lines, but are in favour of 'me' in the first line. There can be little question that the plural gives the meaning. According to the interpretation here adopted, the Psalmist after uttering his own personal experiences turns to the history and hopes of the nation. According to the ideas prevalent amongst many modern critics, the whole Psalm is purely national.

from the depths of the earth: a proverbial phrase for the most distant regions and those most difficult of access, or it may mean, from the direst perils and the very gates of death. The word translated 'depths' properly means 'abyss.' This confidence is justified from the point of view both of personal and national history: but God has His own way of quickening and restoring, quite unexpected either by Israel as a whole or individual Psalmists.

21. In this prayer the individual Israelite undoubtedly represents the nation: its 'greatness' and prosperity will bring personal honour and happiness to the Psalmist.

22–24. The Psalm closes with vows of thanksgiving to the redeeming God. **Holy One of Israel**, a favourite phrase with Isaiah, found only three times in the Psalms. It indicates the

For they are ashamed, for they are confounded, that seek
my hurt.

A Psalm of Solomon. **72**

Give the king thy judgements, O God, 1

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moral perfection and uniqueness of that God who has deigned to enter into close covenant-relationship with Israel. The last lines find parallels in xxxv. 4, xl. 14.

PSALM LXXII. THE DOMINION OF THE LORD'S ANOINTED.

The title of this Psalm is rightly given by R. V. as **of Solomon,** not 'for Solomon' (A. V.). Few, however, are now found to support the tradition of Solomonic authorship, though Delitzsch is content to do so—and Perowne with some modifications—with the view that the king is praying for himself, in the strong desire that 'the Messianic ideal might be realized in his person and the Messianic age through his reign.' On the other hand Cheyne, here following Hitzig, would attribute the Psalm to a poet of the third century B.C., the king celebrated in it being Ptolemy Philadelphus. The incredibilities of the latter theory have been touched on in the Introduction to Ps. xlv.

The truth seems to lie midway between these extremes. An actual king of Judah is probably referred to, though it is impossible to decide whether it be Hezekiah or another. And it is the less needful to conjecture, inasmuch as nothing in the Psalm turns upon the personal character or circumstances of the actual occupant of the throne. The Psalm is ideal throughout, 'Messianic' in the sense that God's anointed one is depicted, not as he so often was in fact, but as he ought to be, as the Psalmist hopes he one day will be. Hence prayer merges in prophecy. The Targum interprets throughout of the Messiah, and the Christian Church has freely applied the Psalm to Christ. though, remarkably enough, it is not once quoted in N. T. This glowing description of God's vicegerent on earth is best read without primary reference to Solomon, Hezekiah, or Ptolemy Philadelphus, but as a prophetic prayer, already partly fulfilled after a fashion the Psalmist never expected, partly still awaiting fulfilment—though the time and manner of that ultimate realization are altogether beyond human presage and conjecture.

The Psalm forms one connected whole, but a break may perhaps be found at the end of verse 7, the first section referring to the relation between the king and his own people; verses 8–14 describe the spread of his dominion till it includes the whole earth; verses 15–17 offer sublime prayers for the monarch and

And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with judgement.

---

his descendants, while verses 18 and 19 form a doxology to close Book II, and verse 20 is an editorial note which forms no part of the sacred text.

1. That the Psalm is pre-eminently a prayer is made clear by its opening. The name of God occurs only once in it, but this verse governs the whole interpretation. God is asked in the opening petition to grant to the king the power to 'speak as the oracles of God,' that his ordinances and acts of administration—**thy judgements**—and the spirit which prompts and directs them—**thy righteousness**—may be in accordance with the Divine will. In Prov. viii. 15, 16 princes and kings are said to govern by virtue of Divine wisdom: this is the royal ideal in Israel, and the Psalmist prays that it may be realized.

The phrase **the king's son** must be understood as a synonym for the king himself. It is not a prayer for his heir, but the first line of the verse is strengthened by a parallel in the second; compare Prov. xxx. 4, 'What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?'

2. The chief question of interpretation in this Psalm is the rendering of the tenses, whether the idea is best conveyed by simple futures as in A.V. and R.V., or by optatives 'May be, Let him be!' &c. Most modern commentators adopt the optative throughout. Others consider that the prayers begin in verse 8, where the form of the verb changes, but would use futures in verses 2–7. If verse 1 be a prayer, and the whole Psalm from verse 8 onwards be prayer, it is most natural to understand the intervening verbs also as optative, and this seems to give the meaning of the Psalm best. It may escape attention that R.V. gives the interpretation '*Let him judge*, and so throughout the Psalm,' a place in its margin. From the exegetical point of view this is to be preferred, though the loss in the sacred associations of familiar words is considerable. According to R.V. text, after the opening prayer the Psalmist passes into a direct prophecy of a coming ideal king, which is continued to the close.

The two leading words of verse 1 are repeated, the king is to administer justice to all classes alike. The dangers of oppression under irresponsible Eastern rulers are very great; the temptation to 'crush' and 'grind the face of the poor' is strong. Amos, Isaiah, and other prophets sternly denounce this evil, and the king who dealt out even-handed justice to all was as highly esteemed as he was rare, see verses 4 and 12.

The mountains shall bring peace to the people, 3
And the hills, in righteousness.
He shall judge the poor of the people, 4
He shall save the children of the needy,
And shall break in pieces the oppressor.
They shall fear thee while the sun endureth, 5
And so long as the moon, throughout all generations.
He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: 6
As showers that water the earth.
In his days shall the righteous flourish; 7
And abundance of peace, till the moon be no more.

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3. Render, 'Let the mountains and the hills bring forth peace for the people—through righteousness.' Peace is represented as the gracious fruit which will grow on every tree and every hill-slope, if righteousness prevail under the rule of a righteous king. Compare Isa. xxxii. 17.

4. A further detailed illustration of the fact that the fullest justice includes kindliness and clemency. It is the duty of the righteous king to crush the oppressor, and so to protect and preserve the needy and those who have no helper.

5. 'May they fear thee.' This cannot of course refer to the king, who is not directly addressed throughout the Psalm. It must mean God, carrying on the prayer of verse 1, but this would break the connexion of thought. Probably LXX and Vulg., followed by several modern commentators, preserve the right text, and we should read:—

> 'May he endure as long as the sun and while the moon doth shine (*lit.* 'in presence of the moon') throughout all generations!'

6. 'Let him be as rain coming down' on meadows newly mown, and therefore prepared to receive showers more readily. The parched roots quickly suck up the refreshing moisture, and even in a few hours the brown plain will be green with verdure. It may be said that it is but a small part of human woes that laws and kings can cause or cure, but an Eastern king can almost by his fiat change desolation into tranquil prosperity—certainly he can do the reverse.

7. In this verse the thought follows that of verse 3, with its mention of righteousness and peace; the figure employed is in continuation of verse 6, showing what kind of plants will flourish in a kingdom thus blessed by showers of royal beneficence;

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River unto the ends of the earth.
9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him;
And his enemies shall lick the dust.
10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents:
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him:
All nations shall serve him.
12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth;
And the poor, that hath no helper.

---

whilst an echo of verse 5 is found in the note of perplexity, 'till the moon be no more.'

8. The Psalmist passes now from the immediate domain of this righteous ruler, and enlarges his prayer to include the influence which his sway will exercise over surrounding and distant nations.

A change in the form of the verb is noticeable from this verse to the eleventh. **from sea to sea,** that is, according to the promise of Exod. xxiii. 31, from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. 'From the River to the ends of the earth' means from the Euphrates, the eastern boundary of Jewish thought, to the dim unknown western regions which formed the limit in the opposite direction. In 1 Kings iv. 21 Solomon is said to have reigned 'from the River to the border of Egypt,' and see verse 24. Geographical considerations are not to be pressed here; the phraseology is employed, as in Zech. ix. 10, in a proverbial sense, for dominion extended to the bounds of the habitable globe.

9. Various tribes and nations are specified as doing homage to this viceroy of the great king. The wilderness-dwellers are the nomad Bedawin, who call no man master.

10, 11. Tarshish, Tartessus in South Spain, a Phoenician colony, was the great commercial centre of the far west. Her ships were in all waters.

the isles is a general name for the coasts of the Mediterranean; compare Isa. xlii. 4, 12. **Sheba** is a name for South-East Arabia, 1 Kings x. 1. The meaning of **Seba** is more doubtful, but Josephus gives it as the name of the capital of Meroe in Ethiopia. All these regions are to be tributary to the king; 1 Kings iv. shows that Solomon's influence had already been felt in most of them.

12, 13. See notes on verses 2 and 4. The basis of this king's influence rests not on his personal prowess, nor upon the might of

He shall have pity on the poor and needy, 13
And the souls of the needy he shall save.
He shall redeem their soul from oppression and violence; 14
And precious shall their blood be in his sight:
And they shall live; and to him shall be given of the 15
gold of Sheba:
And men shall pray for him continually;
They shall bless him all the day long.
There shall be abundance of corn in the earth upon the 16
top of the mountains;
The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon:

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his armies, but upon the blended righteousness and mercifulness of his rule.

14. Read 'from fraud' (R. V. marg.) and **violence,** the two dangers which threaten 'the soul,' i. e. the life, of the poor in ill-governed countries. 'Precious is their blood'—the cheapness of human life in lands where kings do not protect it, and murderers escape easily, is a sadly familiar feature of history in some lands. In Ps. cxvi. 15 the death of saints is said to be thus 'precious' in the sight of God; He watches over their lives and will not lightly let them perish.

15. And they shall live: according to the reading adopted in R. V. text this means the poor men whose lives the King has preserved. But the margin reads 'he,' and it is better to place a full stop at the end of verse 14, and refer each clause in this verse to the King. Render, therefore, 'And so may he long live and may there be given to him . . . may men pray for him continually and bless him all the day!' The latter clauses describe the popular regard which the ruler who thus cares for the best interests of his people is sure to win. The verbs are to be understood impersonally, as equivalent to passives; people shall bring him presents, and prayer for his welfare shall be offered continually, celebrating the virtues which distinguish his reign.

The Hebrew cannot mean 'prayer *unto* him.' This translation, which has found its way into many versions, is a note of the Messianic interpretation of the Psalm which has obtained from the time of the Targum onwards.

16. 'May there be abundance of corn in the land': the rendering 'handful,' A. V. and R. V. marg., is misleading in English, as if the meaning were that a small quantity of grain should multiply

And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the
earth.
17 His name shall endure for ever;
His name shall be continued as long as the sun:
And men shall be blessed in him;
All nations shall call him happy.

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel,
Who only doeth wondrous things:
19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever;

---

many fold and the small beginnings of the kingdom have great endings. The prayer is that everywhere, even upon the hill-tops, there may be fertility, the fields of corn waving—or, according to some, 'rustling'—like the great cedars of Lebanon in the wind that sweeps across the mountains. In the last line render, 'And may men spring forth out of the city like grass of the earth.' The country fertile, the cities populous—such is the definition of a nation's prosperity; such was the historian's account of Judah and Israel in the days of Solomon, 'many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry' 1 Kings iv. 20; and such was the Psalmist's hope for the coming age.

17, 18. A sample of the prayers for the king mentioned in verse 15. 'May his name endure for ever!' In the second line the marginal rendering 'have issue' refers to the dynasty, that it may be long perpetuated. The literal rendering of the third line is found in the margin, 'may the nations bless themselves in him.' This alludes to the promise given to Abraham in Gen. xxii. 18, and implies that the king will represent to the nations the very type of perfect prosperity, so that they can pray for nothing better than to be as he is. The passive **be blessed** gives a more obvious meaning and reads more naturally in English, especially when understood in a Messianic sense, but the conjugation is reflexive, and the more exact translation of R. V. marg. should at least be preserved in a note.

18, 19. 'Blessed be Yahweh Elohim, God of Israel.' A doxology appended by the editor to Book II. See xli. 13. Whether the fuller form of the doxology here be due to the fact that it follows so auspicious and glorious a Psalm it is impossible to say. But the devout reader may well think that the large petitions of Ps. lxxii demand a doxology which shall set forth the inexhaustible resources of the God who is asked to do these

And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen, and Amen.

The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. 20

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great things, and that seems to be the point of view from which these verses are written.

Amen, and Amen: the response of the congregation. The people are bidden thus to respond to public prayer and praise in Ps. cvi. 48, and are represented as so doing in Neh. viii. 6.

20. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. A colophon or note, probably added by the editor of the Elohistic collection, to mark the end of a group of 'Davidic' Psalms. Book III contains only one Psalm 'of David,' lxxxvi, but Books IV and V contain several, which obviously were not known to this compiler. For further remarks on the significance of this note, see Introd. p. 7.

NOTES

NOTE A. NAMES OF GOD.

THE importance of names in the O. T. must have been noticed by every careful reader. The 'name' in Hebrew is not a mere appellative, it stands for a revelation of nature or character. In the case of the Divine Being, the subject obviously acquires a special importance. The following notes on the subject may be found of use in reading the Psalms.

1. The proper name of the God of Israel, known as the Tetragrammaton, &c., as consisting of the four letters J H V H, occurs nearly 7,000 times in O. T. It was '*the* name,' Lev. xxiv. 11; 'the glorious and fearful name,' Deut. xxviii. 58. The current pronunciation in English, **Jehovah,** is an etymological monstrosity; it consists of the consonants of one Hebrew word and the vowels of another. It has only been in use since the Reformation, but during three centuries has become so familiar as an English word that its retention at present is unavoidable. Controversy has arisen both as to the correct pronunciation and the meaning of J H V H. As to pronunciation, it may be said, in a word, that a general consensus now fixes it as 'Yahwéh,' and as such it is transliterated in this volume.

As to the meaning of the name, an explanation is given in Exod. iii. 14, of which R. V. marg. shows that alternative translations are possible. The derivation there suggested furnishes the meanings 'He who is' or 'He who will be,' thus laying stress on the reality and permanence of the Divine existence and the assurance implied in the name that God will ever be to His people all that they need and all that the idea of a God implies. Critics have objected both to the derivation and explanation given by their sacred writer, but without supplying a satisfactory alternative. It is probable that the name was an ancient one, see Gen. iv. 26; Exod. vi. 20 (if Jochebed = 'Yahweh is glory'), and at the time of Moses it was not so much newly revealed (Exod. vi. 2) as invested with new and specially sacred significance. From this period onwards Yahweh remains the distinctive name for the Covenant God of Israel, who throughout their history takes Israel to Him for a people and is to them a God (Exod. vi. 7).

2. **Elohim** is a generic name for God, occurring between 2,000 and 3,000 times in O. T. It is a plural word, the singular **Eloah** being found fifty-seven times, chiefly in Job, and entirely in poetical passages. It is used of heathen deities, designating either one or many such; also in a secondary sense, of supernatural beings,

translated sometimes as 'angels,' Ps. viii. 5 A. V. and R. V. marg. Compare also Ps. xxix. 1, lxxxii. 6, xcvii. 7, and Job i. 6. The derivation is uncertain, but probably implies an object of reverence or religious awe. The use of the plural has been described as a relic of earlier polytheism, or a proof that other supernatural beings were associated with God, forming a kind of court of the great King; but these contentions have not been established, and it is best understood as a plural of majesty or dignity, familiar in Hebrew and easily intelligible. This word, descriptive of the Deity in general, not the specific God of Israel, came into more frequent use in later times, as a false reverence shrank from the employment of the sacred name.

A kindred word **El** is used more than 200 times in O. T., seventy-three times in the Psalms, usually in poetry. It is supposed to be derived from a root meaning 'the Strong One,' but no certainty can be ascribed to this.

3. **Shaddai** occurs about forty times, chiefly in Job; it is adjectival in form, and is used six times with El. Exod. vi. 3 gives it as the name of God used by the patriarchs. Its derivation is uncertain; the meanings 'sufficient' and 'destroyer' are supported by some, others connect it with an Assyrian root meaning 'to be high.' The traditional meaning 'Almighty' is at least as probable as any of these.

4. **Elyon** occurs more than thirty times in O. T., usually as an appellation with El or Yahweh, sometimes however standing alone. The meaning is unquestionable—God 'Most High'; the Phoenicians appear to have employed a similar word. It is found some twenty times in the Psalms, and is considered by Prof. Cheyne to be a mark of late date. He says 'the Levitical poets have a special predilection for this name,' and in his note on Ps. vii. 18, 'The widening influence of foreign sojourn opened the eyes of the Jews to the usefulness of this ancient word-symbol.' The name was ancient, however, very ancient, if Gen. xiv is to be trusted, and used by non-Israelites (Num. xxiv. 16; Isa. xiv. 14). It would not be safe to regard its use as a criterion of date either in the Psalms or elsewhere.

5. The word **Adonai,** properly a plural with first pronominal suffix, and meaning 'my lord,' is used more than 100 times as a proper name for God; it is the word from which the vowels of 'Jehovah' have been supplied.

6. **Lord of Hosts, Tsebaoth.** The full title is Yahweh, God of hosts, see Hos. xii. 5; the most frequent form is 'Yahweh of hosts,' 'Elohim of hosts' is fairly common, and the title Adonai is sometimes prefixed. This is emphatically the prophetic name of God; out of 282 instances, 246 belong to the prophetical writings. It does not occur in the Pentateuch, and only fifteen times in the Psalms. The earlier meaning of the title had reference to military matters;

God is described as the God of armies, especially the armies of Israel. See Sam. xvii. 45. But in the prophets the hosts are unquestionably celestial, either stars or angels, probably the former, as furnishing a chief proof of the omnipotence and sovereignty of the great Ruler of all, Isa. xl. 26. The LXX understood the word in this sense, and their paraphrase 'The All-Sovereign One' reproduces the prevailing Hebrew idea.

NOTE B. USE OF THE TERM 'CHASID.'

The word in question is an adjective derived from the noun *chesed*, generally rendered 'lovingkindness.' The substantive is chiefly employed to denote the gracious love shown by God to His people, sometimes it describes the kindness of man to man, very rarely the duteous love of man to God. The adjective is found about twenty-five times in the Psalter, only five or six times elsewhere in O. T. So far as its form is concerned, it may have either an active or passive signification, and denote either the man who exercises the quality of *chesed*, i. e. kind, merciful, or one to whom this quality is shown—an object of Divine love and favour. Kirkpatrick, following Hupfeld, argues for the latter meaning, adducing the fact that in fifteen instances the word is found with a pronoun, 'my,' 'thy,' 'his,' i. e. God's *chasidim*, the context favouring the idea that God's grace to His people is intended, rather than their own virtuous dispositions. Most modern critics, however, take the other view, Cheyne translating *chasid* as 'man of love,' and Driver holding that it properly signifies 'kind,' though in later usage it came to denote the 'pious' generally. See an interesting note on the word in his *Parallel Psalter*, p. 443. Schultz, in his *Old Testament Theology*, says that 'the meaning of the word certainly seems to have oscillated between "he who possesses the attribute *chesed*, pius" and "he who experiences the *chesed* of God towards himself," the beloved of God' (ii. 23 note). And Prof. Cheyne marks what he calls the 'specializing use of the term' to denote 'those who responded to God's covenant-love of Israel by obeying His commands at all cost and believing the promises of his torah' (*Bampton Lectures*, p. 117).

In the later portion of Jewish history the word *Chasidim* became the name of a party more or less closely defined. In 1 Macc. ii. 42 we read, 'Then were gathered together unto them a company of Hasidaeans, mighty men of Israel, every one that offered himself willingly for the law. . . . And they mustered a host, and smote sinners in their anger, and lawless men in their wrath.' But it would be an anachronism to read this almost technical meaning of the word into the passages of general import in which it is found in the Psalter; for only in the special sense named is the word 'distinctively Maccabaean.' 'Hasidaean,' like the still later

'Zealot,' is a party name, and marks the incipient degeneration of a noble word.

It is impossible to find a single English word which will exactly cover the area occupied by the Hebrew. A. V. and R. V. employ 'godly,' 'merciful,' 'holy,' and 'saints' as renderings. R. V. uses 'holy' once only, in xvi. 10; 'merciful' once, in xviii. 26 (of God and man); 'gracious' once, in cxlv. 17 (of God); 'godly' six times, and 'saints' sixteen times. The use of 'holy' in A. V. of lxxxvi. 2 is distinctly misleading, and this translation has probably been retained in R. V. of xvi. 10 for special reasons. The meaning 'merciful' is quite exceptional in the Psalter, whilst the phrase 'one whom God favoureth' is employed once only, in xii. 2 (R. V. marg.). We are disposed to think that the Revisers have succeeded admirably in reproducing the shades of meaning in their English renderings of *chasid* from first to last. In iv. 2, the first occasion of its use, the justice of the remark of Schultz quoted above is shown, a measure of ambiguity is unavoidable, but the idea of Divine favour predominates over that of human piety. The prevailing use, however, is fairly represented by 'godly,' whilst in the later Psalms there is a marked tendency to regard such men as forming a recognized class, who may be described as God's 'saints' in the higher and finer meaning of the word. The *chasidim* or 'pious ones' of the Psalter are, therefore, those who, being privileged to enjoy the covenant-love of Jehovah, respond to it by loyal devotion to the will, the worship, and the precepts of their gracious God.

NOTE C. THE CHERUBIM.

Though this word occurs only thrice in the Psalter—xviii. 10; lxxx. 1; xcix. 1—it seems desirable to give a somewhat fuller account of it than is possible in the notes on individual verses. Its etymology is uncertain. Conjectures connect it with a Syriac word meaning 'strong,' an Assyrian word *Kirubu* which *might* present the analogy of the winged bull of the inscriptions, the Egyptian *xerep*, the Greek *grups*, and our own 'griffin'; but these are little more than guesses from which little light proceeds. Cherubim are mentioned in passages of very various import from Genesis to Ezekiel, in the symbolism of the ark and in the poetry of later Psalmists. They are represented as composite creatures, with the wings of birds and the bodies of terrestrial animals; and thus, combining the strength of the earth with the swiftness of the wind, they aptly symbolize the manifold forces of nature. In this capacity they are described alike in prophetic vision and in sacred art as attending upon the Deity and helping to enhance the glory of His manifested presence. At the same time, no precise shape is assigned to them; the fact that these only of living creatures were portrayed in the tabernacle and the temple without any violation of the second commandment shows that they were regarded only as ministers of the Most High, while as His ministers they occupied a place in His court, to signify His regal state and perform His behests. In Eden they serve to guard the tree of life; in the ark they cover the mercy-seat with their wings; in the temple more highly elaborated figures were devised for the same purpose, and they were represented in the carved woodwork of the doors and walls (1 Kings vi. 29, 32, 35). In Ezek. xxviii. 14 the prince of Tyre is compared to a cherub as a chosen attendant of God in His holy mountain, and in chs. i and x the prophet's symbolism becomes complex and not easily intelligible, though in these sublime visions the general idea of the cherubim as living forces, bearing up the chariot of Jehovah, waiting on His will, and attending His progress, is impressively conveyed.

The name and idea of these strange creatures may have originated in primitive myth, but in Biblical usage fabulous and superstitious elements have disappeared, while the symbolic meaning remains. In the Psalms the usage is twofold. In xviii. 10 the cherub stands for the swift storm-cloud on which the Divine Being rides when He appears to assert His majesty and deliver His servant; compare civ. 3. In lxxx. 1 and xcix. 1—where a reference is clearly intended to 2 Kings xix. 15; Isa. xxxvii. 16—the Revisers' text reads 'Thou that sittest upon,' and their margin, 'Thou that dwellest between the cherubim.' The former is more literal. The powers of nature form, as it were, a throne on which God is seated (compare xxii. 3); they are present in that abode of glory in which He resides; and from the midst of a cherub-supported throne He dispenses justice and grace alike to His worshippers. This interpretation is borne out by later Rabbinic legends, which describe various orders of angelic beings, cherubim amongst them, whose function it was to support the throne of God or bear up His 'glory' as He passes on His triumphal way.

In reading the Psalms it is important to remember that these references are highly poetical. They were so intended by the writers, and they were so understood by those who in old time read or sang the praises of Israel. Whilst some light upon this obscure subject may be gained by the study of Semitic and other mythologies, the sacred writers have treated it in their own way and stamped it with their own impress, their one object being not to interfere with, but to heighten and emphasize the incomparable majesty of God. And even yet, in divers languages and countries, few nobler or more impressive descriptions can be found of God as abiding in His temple or appearing in the storm than those which speak of Him as 'dwelling between the cherubim,' or which declare that 'He rode upon a cherub and did fly, and came swooping upon the wings of the wind.'

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The Century Bible

A MODERN COMMENTARY

The Psalms

LXXIII—CL

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY

OF

FRIEDRICH BAETHGEN

WHO, AS THIS WORK WAS BEING PRINTED, PASSED INTO ETERNAL REST (AGED 56), AFTER LONG YEARS OF WEAKNESS AND PAIN: IN SINCERE ADMIRATION OF HIS PIETY, LEARNING, AND JUDGEMENT AS TEACHER (AT BERLIN) AND AS CHIEFEST OF RECENT PSALM COMMENTATORS

THE AUTHOR

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THE CENTURY BIBLE

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII — CL

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII—CL

INTRODUCTION[1]

1. NAME OF THE PSALTER AND OF THE INDIVIDUAL PSALMS.

THE original text of the Hebrew Psalter has no heading. The Massorites or Editors of our Hebrew Bible prefixed such names to the books of the O. T. as were current in their day. 'Tehillim' (shortened to 'Tillim'), a word meaning 'Praises,' is the name prefixed by these Jewish Editors to the Psalter, a name far from suitable, since a large number of the Psalms are made up of petitions, confessions, complaints, and meditations. Five Psalms[2] are, in the titles, called 'prayers' (*tephillim*[3]), and at the close of Ps. lxxii in an editorial postscript the 'David' Psalms are described as 'prayers' (*tephilloth*).

Far more suitable is the title generally given to the book in the Greek translations, and also by Greek writers of the early Church: i.e. Psalms[4] and 'Book of Psalms[5].' The word 'Psalm' is the English form of a word which in Hellenistic Greek means a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. The cognate Greek verb means 'to pluck,' 'pull': and then 'to play a stringed instrument with the fingers' (not with the plectrum).

The Greek word *Psalmos* is the one used in the titles of individual Psalms for the Hebrew word *Mizmōr*, and it is generally assumed that the Hebrew has the same meaning that *Psalmos* has in Hellenistic Greek. But the Hebrew word seems to have meant, originally, a 'song' as such, for the cognate verb in both Assyrian and Arabic relates to the use of the voice: 'to cry out,' 'to sing,' 'to speak into a reed-pipe.'

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[1] This Introduction deals almost exclusively with matters not treated of in vol. i.

[2] Pss. xvii, lxxxvi, xc, cii, cxlii.

[3] On the meaning of this Hebrew word see at lxxxvi, *Title*.

[4] See Luke xxiv. 44.

[5] Luke xx. 42; Acts i. 20.

The Greek word *Psalmos* may be thought of as having an extension of meaning comparable to that in our English word 'lyric,' which from meaning 'a song to be accompanied by the lyre,' has come to include all singable poems, or poems of that character. The Hebrew name *Mizmōr* may have had a similar original signification and a similar extension of meaning, but the evidence for this is not conclusive. Though the Hebrew name occurs in the titles of fifty-seven Psalms (always represented by the Greek *Psalmos*), it is not once met with anywhere else in the O. T. It occurs, however, in the recently discovered fragments of the Hebrew text of Sir.[1], but it is unfortunate that in this solitary example outside the Psalm titles it has a different meaning.

2. DIVISIONS OF THE PSALTER: BOOKS, GROUPS, PSALMS, VERSES.

Owing to exigencies of space the author must refer, for fuller information concerning books and groups, to what may be seen in vol. i. pp. 6 ff. and at pp. 37 f. and 127 f. of the present vol.

Canon Cheyne[2] makes large use of the divisions within the Psalter—books and groups—for the purpose of determining the age of individual Psalms. His guiding principle is this: 'When certain Psalms, all of which agree in some leading features and positively disagree in none, have come to us from ancient times in one group, we are bound to assign them to the same period, though it is only in one instance that we can, from internal evidence, speak positively as to their date.' Armed with this principle of Psalm criticism, he comes to the conclusion that no Psalm is of pre-exilic date with the possible exception of a part of Ps. xviii, and this belongs to the reign of Josiah (640–609). The main difficulty in the application of the principle followed by Cheyne is, that our knowledge of pre-exilic history is much slighter than that of the later history. Perhaps if we were better informed as to the earlier history of the nation we should be able to find many incidents in that history suitable as occasions and backgrounds for the Psalms.

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[1] xlix. 1. 'As a *Mizmōr* (LXX "music") in a banquet of wine.'

[2] *O. P.* p. 6.

Prof. James Robertson in his *Croall Lectures*[1] draws a conclusion from the divisions into books and groups which is exactly the opposite of Cheyne's. This is how he reasons[2]: Each of the five Books existed, probably, as an independent hymn-book, before it was joined to the rest. The smaller Psalters must have had a separate existence before they were incorporated into the larger one. The individual Psalms would be yet older.

There is ground for believing, however, that Dr. Robertson is not quite correct in his suppositions. Books IV and V existed as one collection before they were broken up into two books. They have many common features which point to this conclusion: see the Introduction to these Books. Book I (except Pss. i and ii) was used by itself for a long time, as it contains older Psalms than the other books, and, in fact, it included all the Psalms known at the time of its compilation. But Books II and III were never used separately, though they contain groups that were, and to them Dr. Robertson's reasoning applies.

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[1] *Poetry and Religion of the Psalms*, 1898.

[2] Ibid., see Lecture VI.

Psalms: Number of, and Numbering of.

There are 150 Psalms in our Hebrew Bible, and also in the LXX and Vulgate—what is added to the LXX as number 151 being distinctly declared to be 'outside the number.' Some ancient Hebrew authorities give the number of the Psalms as 149, others as 147, the number being thus reduced by uniting one or more of the pairs 1 f., 9 f., 114 f. Though, however, the M.T. and the LXX agree in the sum total of the Psalms, they differ in the reckoning of the individual Psalms, and as the LXX and the Vulgate (which in the Psalter follows the LXX) agree together against the enumeration followed in the Hebrew and modern English, some confusion may be obviated if we put side by side the number of the Psalms in the M.T. and also in the principal versions.

Hebrew (*English, German, Welsh,* &c.)	*LXX* (*Vulgate and all Roman Catholic Versions*).
i–viii.	i–viii.
ix f.	ix.
xi–cxiii.	x–cxii.
cxiv f.	cxiii.
cxvi.	cxiv f.
cxvii–cxlvi.	cxvi–cxlv.
cxlvii.	cxlvi f.
cxlviii–cl.	cxlviii–cl.

It will be helpful to remember that in the Hebrew the number is generally one in advance of the LXX after Ps. ix: thus Ps. x in the LXX is number xi in the M.T. What is true of the LXX applies to the Vulgate and also to the Roman Catholic Versions, all of which are based on the Vulgate.

Verses. When the title of the Psalm includes three or more words it is commonly counted as a separate verse in the Hebrew Bible, but not so in the English versions nor in other modern versions, though the LXX, in most printed editions, is made to follow the practice of the

Hebrew Bibles. Some Hebrew titles are so long as to be counted as two verses (so Ps. li). The following rule will be found a useful one to follow: when there is a title of several words the number of the verse in Hebrew will be one in advance of the number in English: thus verse 6 in Hebrew will be verse 5 in English. It is of importance to remember this deviation in the numbering, since commentaries do not agree in their way of quoting, some following the numbering of verses in the M.T., others adopting the English enumeration. In a commentary on the Hebrew text it is a good practice to give the number of the verse in the Hebrew, followed by the number in English in brackets: thus vi. 20 (19). In a commentary on the English text the reverse is desirable. As, however, the dual numbering would occupy more space than can be spared in this small commentary, it is the English verse numbers that will alone be given.

3. THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN THE PSALMS.

It must be remembered that in the Psalter we have a collection of songs, and not of theological treatises or even of prophetical utterances: and these songs are eminently subjective, as songs are apt to be. There are very few poems of the didactic kind, Ps. cxix being one. Though, however, these Psalms utter for the most part the feelings of the writers or of those for whom they write, yet they reflect the ideas and sentiments by which, at the time of composition, the nation was swayed, just as the songs of any age have on them the impress of that age, its governing moods, its dominant thoughts.

The word 'messiah' is of Hebrew origin, and means literally 'one who is anointed': see on lxxxix. 20, cv. 15. Among the Israelites, kings, prophets, and priests were all alike set apart for office by having oil poured on the head, a sign probably of the pouring forth of the Divine Spirit qualifying for the office. 'The messiah,' i. e. 'the anointed one,' is therefore a term that could with equal propriety be ascribed to every king, prophet, and priest who had received the anointing of oil. As a matter of fact it is only the priest that is described in this absolute way—'the anointed one'—in the O.T.[1], though the king is characterized in a very similar way, for he is spoken of as 'Jehovah's messiah' (or 'anointed one'). This last expression is used in reference to Saul[2], David[3], and many of their successors, and it is also a designation of the Davidic king in general. Even Cyrus the heathen king is so spoken of[4]. The term 'messiah' is never applied in the O.T. to that king on whose advent all eyes were fixed and from whose righteous reign so much was expected. Dan. ix. 25 f. may be an exception, but that passage is of very uncertain interpretation, and cannot by itself be held to prove the contrary of what has just been stated. In his commentary on *The Epistles of St. John*[5] Westcott writes: 'The history of the title "Messiah" . . . is very remarkable. It is not a characteristic title of the promised Saviour in the O.T. It is not even specifically applied to Him, unless perhaps in Dan. ix. 25 f., a passage of which the interpretation is very doubtful.' The earliest certain occurrence of the word in the sense current among Jews and Samaritans in the time of our Lord appears to be in the 'Psalms of Solomon,' which belong to about B.C. 50[6]. But the ideas out of which the expectation of a future Deliverer grew are present in the oldest parts of the O.T., and they abound in the Psalter. The leading idea wrapped up in the term 'messiah' in the later sense is that of 'deliverance,' and the attitude of mind awakened by that thought is one of hope and confidence for the future. Now nothing stands out more prominently in the Psalter than the immovable confidence in the final issue of things which the writers display. When the nation is at its lowest, and most people would have lost hope, these religious poets and the people who sang their songs were buoyed up by a hope that never failed them: Jehovah can and will deliver the nation, or at least the righteous part of it, let their foes do their worst: see Pss. vii, xiii, xxii, xxxv, xxxvii, lix, lxviii, lxxiv, lxxxiii, xc, cvi, cxv, cxxiii, cxxvi, cxxx, cxliv.

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[1] See Lev. iv. 3, v. 16, vi. 15.

[2] 1 Sam. xii. 3, 15.

[3] 1 Sam. xvi. 6.

[4] Isa. xlv. 1.

[5] p. 189.

[6] See xvii. 36, xviii. 6, 8.

In the so-called 'Royal' or 'Theocratic Psalms' there rings out such joy and jubilant trust as have rarely been equalled and never surpassed by poet or seer: see Pss. xciii and xcv–c. The cause of all the rejoicing is that Jehovah has once again asserted His sovereignty. He was king aforetime and all along, but He has given a fresh proof that His people are His in a special manner: that as their king He protects as well as chastises them. Jehovah is king; that fact supplies the ground for absolute trust in the present and for fearlessly facing the future. What is it that lies at the bottom of this attitude of confidence and hope? Mainly it is the covenant which Jehovah was believed to have made with Israel. Them only had He called forth from among all the nations of the earth, entering into covenant relations with them at the very beginning, even at Sinai[1], and undertaking to guide, protect, and prosper them on condition that they were loyal to Him. This conception of a covenant is most prominent in the O. T. writings which belong to what is known as the Deuteronomic period: i.e. in Deut., Jer., &c.: yet the thought meets us in Amos iii. 2 (cf. i. 9), and the word as well as the thought in Hos. vi. 7, viii. 1, xi. 11.

When the nation's affairs were at a low ebb the pious among them took heart of comfort from the covenant Jehovah had made with them through their fathers, and from the belief that, if they only repented of the sins which had brought upon them all their misfortunes, He would renew the favours of the past. The earnest entreaties for pardon are to be understood only in the light of the covenant. They mean this: 'O do thou forgive us those sins by which we forfeited the blessings secured by the covenant with us. Help us now to have clean hearts and to live straight lives, so that we may secure for ourselves the covenanted blessings.'

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[1] See Exod. vi, xix, xxiii.

Why did this nation alone of all earth's peoples have such confidence in the triumph of righteousness, for the idea of the covenant carries that with it? Surely God had revealed Himself to them as to no other people: though not for their sakes alone, but that through them the light Divine might shine throughout the world.

The Psalms in which this hope is embodied are in the strict, though not in the narrow sense, Messianic: the hope that breathes in them appears in the Gospel in a much clearer light, and, in addition, we have in Christ the basis of that hope.

Some have confined the name 'Messianic Psalms' to those Psalms which in the N.T. are quoted in reference to Jesus Christ. Judged by that standard there are but nine, or at most ten, Messianic Psalms. Some of the Psalms quoted in the N. T. in reference to Jesus Christ are less truly charged with the Messianic hope than those noticed above. The early Christian Fathers, followed by the mystic writers of the Middle Ages, saw a reference to Christ in every verse of the Psalter, and even in the titles: this is, however, not exegesis, but pious fancy gone mad.

There is a large number of Psalms which connect the nation's hope with a king of the line of David. When the good time comes, the throne will be occupied by a descendant of David, whose rule will be just. He will defend the nation from foreign oppression and from internal injustice. A reign of righteousness and prosperity will be inaugurated: sin, and that which follows in its trail, suffering, will be things of the past.

This expectation is based on 2 Sam. vii, which recites the covenant made with David, according to which there was to be a king on David's throne for ever. In Pss. xviii, lxxii, lxxxix, and cxxxii blessings are promised or anticipated which no merely human king could bring. The Son of David is idealized: he is to be greater than any that had been, and the medium of greater blessings. We have this thought developed in Ps. lxxii, and in 'Psalms of Solomon,' xvii. The resemblance between these last is so great that one cannot but suspect that the occurrence of the name Solomon in the title of both is due to the fact that an idealized Solomon was thought to be described. Cf. our Lord's words, 'A greater than Solomon is here[1].'

In the Psalms of the kind now under consideration the expected king is not to be the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Deliverer: Jehovah is always regarded as playing this rôle. The King who is to come will reign over a people whom *Jehovah* has redeemed. Does this exclude the thought of a redeeming King? Of one who at once delivers us from our sins and is at the same time our supreme King? By no means. We may assume that God gave the saints of these ancient times as much knowledge of His ways as they were capable of taking in.

The Psalms contain nothing more definite concerning the conception of the Messiah than has been noticed above. We have the experience and expression of hope, such as Christ brings in perfection: we have also the hope and expectation of a king.

In later times the Messiah came to be regarded, not merely, as in O.T. prophecy, as the King of a redeemed people, but as Himself the Redeemer and Deliverer. The idea of Messiahship began to be separated from the notion of a civil ruler at the time when the later Hasmoneans or Maccabeans so grossly abused their power. Though not themselves of the family of David, they were for a long time regarded by the bulk of the nation as realizing the covenant made with David: but continued corruption of life and of rule made that thought impossible, and the pious or Pharisee party, of which the 'Psalms of Solomon' are the manifesto, adopted the belief in a Messiah of a different kind, viz. one who would rule in men's hearts and lives.

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[1] Matt. xii. 42 (Luke xi. 31).

Is there anything in the Psalter concerning a suffering Messiah? The answer must be an unequivocal denial, though such a denial is very far from being a denial of the doctrine itself.

What is to be said of those Psalms or parts of Psalms which are quoted in the N. T. in reference to our Saviour? Had the original O. T. writers in view the specific incidents in connexion with which these quotations stand in the N. T.? Each case must be considered by itself, and reference may be made to the notes on the passages involved in vol. i and in the present volume of the *Century Bible*.

It would seem that, at least in a large number of examples, the Psalms and other parts of the O. T. are quoted in a loose way as having some affinity of thought with what the writer is saying. Ps. viii. 5 is quoted in Heb. ii. 7 in a sense which the Hebrew forbids. The original says: 'Thou hast made him but little lower than God': in the N. T. it is: 'Thou madest him a little' (or 'for a little') 'lower than the angels.' It is the inaccurate rendering of the LXX that is followed in the N. T. Moreover, the original passage has in view man and only man, but in the N. T. the words are made to apply to Jesus. We have, in fact, a sort of allegorical reasoning: that which reads into things principles which they suggest, though no primary allusion to these principles lay in the words as first written. In Ps. xvi. 10 we have 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see the grave.' In the N. T. *Sheol* is interpreted by the Greek *Hades*, which is not identical, and by both Peter and Paul the word parallel to *Sheol* (*lit.* 'the pit'=the grave) is taken after the LXX to mean corruption, and the reasoning of both writers depends wholly on this inaccurate rendering. Ps. lxviii. 18 is quoted in Eph. iv. 8 as describing the work of Christ, but the verse is altered so much as to make its meaning very different. In the Psalm the words are 'Thou (Jehovah) received gifts among men': i. e. the nations conquered by Israel through Jehovah's help would come bringing tribute to Jehovah as the real King of Israel. In the Epistle it is the ascended Christ who is represented as *bestowing on men* spiritual gifts: 'Thou (Christ) gavest gifts to men.'

We ought surely to deduce from these actual examples the principle on which in the N. T. references are made to the Psalms and to other parts of the O. T. when the person and work of Jesus Christ are under consideration. To do this, instead of coming with a ready-made theory, is to save our Lord Himself and the writers of the N. T. from a charge of inaccuracy which would otherwise lie at their door.

The great preacher and theologian Schleiermacher denied that the N. T. stands in closer connexion with the O. T. than with Greek philosophy. For him the O. T. was not needed as a support for the claims of Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world. The fact that He saves is the one unanswerable proof of His Saviourhood. He is the light of the world, and He shines by His own inherent light. His claims are pre-eminently in Himself. Schleiermacher missed his way in not seeing the shadowings forth of the Christ in the utterances of O. T. seers and poets. He was never a true student of the O. T.: never preached from it. To him the legalism of the Pentateuch represented the spirit and tendency of the whole of the O. T.: yet he was surely right in the emphasis he laid upon the testimony which Jesus Christ *is* to His own character and work.

4. TESTIMONY OF THE PSALTER CONCERNING THE LIFE BEYOND DEATH.

From early times students of the O. T. have been impressed by the comparative silence of the Scriptures of the O. T. with regard to a life beyond the present one. The machinery of O. T. religion was largely, and for a long period wholly, propelled without the help of that belief, now regarded as vital to the very existence of religion. That great Englishman, Bishop Warburton, wrote a book displaying marvellous insight for his time, in which he endeavoured to prove the divinity of the religion of Moses, from the fact that it was accepted and acted upon without the sanctions arising from the belief in a system of future rewards and punishments.

This belief appears to be wholly absent from the pre-exilic writings of the O. T., and it occupies only an unimportant place in the writings which came into being after the Exile.

This state of things is to be explained in a measure by the fact that in early Israel, as in the ancient world generally, the sense of personality was hardly realized. The human unit was the nation, the community, or, at most, the family, and not the individual man. The latter was thought of and derived his significance in connexion with the whole of which he was a part, and it was about that whole that these Israelites speculated, its character and its destiny. There can be no doctrine of a future life for the individual unless there is first of all a clear consciousness of the *ego* or *I*. Before this consciousness is clearly reached, the future thought of will be one for the society to which the individual man belongs. Under the dominion of this thought of the solidarity of the nation no eschatology of the individual could arise. Among the early Hebrews it was the nation that sinned and was punished: it was the nation that was encouraged to look forward to immortality if only it obeyed the commandments of its God. We relegate the principal part of human reward and penalty to the life beyond the grave, but in the thought of the Israelites it is in this present life that Jehovah metes out to men their deserts. Defeat by a foreign foe, exile in a foreign land—these and the like were conceived of as the punishment of national sin—unfaithfulness to the nation's God. The future contemplated was one for the nation, and it was of the nation that the early prophets spoke. There were in the insistence upon national righteousness the seeds of the belief in individual responsibility and in personal immortality: but so long as it was the nation, and not the individual, that constituted the unit of moral action and of responsibility, no eschatology of the individual could be developed.

There was indeed an eschatology of the individual, but it formed no integral part of Yahwism or the true religion of Israel, and never took root in that religion: I refer to the belief in Sheol. This belief was an import, a borrowed element from semitic heathenism. According to it when men die some shadowy remnants of their former selves go to a region between the earth on which man dwells and the subterranean waters[1]. This place was called *Sheol*, a word meaning probably 'what is low,' 'deep down.' It does not denote strictly the grave any more than does the Greek *Hades* or the Latin *Orcus*, though it derives much of the imagery with which it is clothed from the grave. In Sheol the departed spirits of good and bad meet together, and their condition in that realm of shadows seems quite independent of the moral character of the life lived on the earth: see 1 Sam. xxviii. 19; Job iii. 17, 19; Eccles. ix. 5. For the earlier and later conceptions of Sheol see on lxxxviii. 10–13. Dillmann, Smend, Charles, and Cheyne think that in the Sheol of he O. T. there are grades of happiness and misery corre-ponding to the life on earth of the persons: they refer for proof to lxxxvi. 13; Deut. xxxii. 22; Isa. xxxvii. 2; Ezek. xxxii. But these passages cannot bear the weight that is thus set on them, and they are not inconsistent with the view advocated by the late A. B. Davidson and S. D. F. Salmond that, in the Sheol of the O. T., there are no retributive distinctions; the bad man faring as well in the shadow world as the good one. Isa. lvii. 2 cannot, perhaps, be explained in harmony with the view here maintained if the present text is retained; but there are good reasons for holding that the M. T. is here corrupt: see Marti *in loco.* Those who care to pursue the subject further are referred to the following English works and the authorities therein cited: S. D. F. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, Book II, chap. ii; Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism and in Christianity*, chaps. ii–iv; A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 425 ff. See also Dillmann, *Handbuch der alttestamentlichen Theologie*, pp. 389 ff., and Smend, *Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionswissenschaft*⁽²⁾, pp. 478 ff.

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[1] See *Hebrew Cosmology*, pp. 174 f.

Charles, in his exceedingly fresh and interesting work, distinguishes several shades of meaning in the use of *Sheol* in the O. T., but the matter cannot be further discussed here.

With the breaking up of the nation at the Exile, thought gravitated from the nation to the individual, and it is what might have been predicted that in the writings of Jeremiah[1] and Ezekiel[2] the sense of personality stands out clearly. See also Job xxi. 16–34.

Sheol is several times mentioned in the Psalter; see xviii. 6, xxx. 4, xlix. 15 f., lv. 16, lxxxix. 49, cxvi. 3, cxxxix. 8, cxli. 7, and in every case it appears to the present writer to stand, in a general way, for the locality in which the departed were supposed to live. 'To be saved from Sheol' or 'from the pit' means simply to be preserved in the upper world, where fellowship with God is possible, and where He can be praised.

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[1] See xxxiv. 29-34.

[2] See xviii. 2.

The doctrine of Sheol and the practice of necromancy, which is so closely connected with it, are really survivals of that ancestor worship which the Israelites found in Canaan, and which, in part, they adopted. But no doctrine of retribution in another life is involved in the belief in Sheol: that had to be elaborated out of Yahwism, and in Job and other late books it seems to be taught. But it is more than doubtful whether the Psalter, as we have it, has anything at all to say of future rewards and punishments. If the writers, or the community whose sentiments they utter, believed in a hereafter in which it will be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, they must have frequently referred to such a belief as a source of comfort to the faithful and as a ground of warning to the wicked. But, on the contrary, these singers long and pray to be saved from Sheol because once they die their opportunities of praising Jehovah are gone for ever[1]: they wish to have justice done to themselves and speedy punishment inflicted upon their foes, since after death retribution is impossible[2]. The promises made to the faithful relate to the here and now[3]. There are, however, four Psalm passages which have been thought by many to break the general silence about the life of bliss and woe beyond, viz. xvii. 15, xxxvii. 11, xlix. 15, lxxiii. 24: see the notes on these verses in this Commentary (vols. i and ii). In the ast two verses the language is supposed to be suggested by Gen. v. 24, but in both cases the translation and meaning are, to say the least, too uncertain to make them prove a doctrine about which, admittedly, the rest of the Psalter is almost silent. Moreover, even if it be granted hat in both these passages a spiritual world is referred to, hey say nothing about a life following death, but speak only f a spiritual world attained without passing through death.

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[1] vi. 5, lxxxviii. 10. [2] cxliv. 7. [3] lxxxv. 12, and often.

Both the other verses (xvii. 15 and xxxvii. 11) are better understood in the light of their context if their reference is confined to the present life. In xvii. 15 the second number simply repeats the sense of the first. 'Thy face' and 'Thy form' (not likeness) stand for the same thing. The Hebrew rendered 'when I awake' is simply a dittograph for the Hebrew of 'in righteousness'—the Hebrew letters are almost identical though the order is varied. I would then render: 'I being righteous' (in contrast with the wicked of the preceding verses) 'shall gaze on thy face: I shall be satisfied with thy form': i. e. 'He would be content to have fellowship with God in this world.' If the text is kept, translate the last member of the verse: 'I shall be satisfied when thy form appears (*lit.* "wakes up") to me.' The latter rendering has the support of the LXX, and is adopted by Wellhausen. Ps. xxxvii. 11 presents no difficulty when made to refer to the present life only.

We are not questioning, much less denying, the doctrine of a life beyond death in which the wrongs of time shall be set right: that is clearly revealed in certain late parts of the O. T.[1], and especially in the N. T.: the question we have been discussing is whether that doctrine is taught directly or indirectly in the Psalter, and to this we are inclined to give a negative answer. The truth of any doctrine does not depend upon the manner or time of its being revealed. The latter is a question of fact to be investigated as such.

Men that could suffer for their religion as faithful Israelites did, with no prospect of any reward hereafter, must have had very convincing reasons of some kind for believing in that religion. God must have manifested Himself to them in a very real and blessed way, for they counted it their highest joy and their greatest privilege to be with Him and to join in His praise.

If the Psalter says nothing about a hereafter, that may constitute a powerful argument in favour of an earlier date than most moderns are inclined to assign to the Book of Psalms.

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[1] Job i. 21, xix. 25; Isa. xxvi; Dan. xii. 1.

5. THE SPEAKER IN THE 'I PSALMS.'

More than half the songs in our Psalter are uttered in part or wholly in the first person singular, and in Germany they are, for that reason, generally called the 'I Psalms.' During the last fifty years or so much has been written concerning the significance of this 'I': whether it stands for the poet himself or for the personified nation or religious community. The view which has generally obtained, especially in former times, among Jews and Christians is that the 'I' is the individual Psalmist, his personal song being appropriated for congregational use because the experience of the author was ypical, and the sentiments he expressed general. It will e noted that this is exactly what may be said of the ymns sung by Christian congregations, only it has to be orne in mind that promiscuous congregational singing, uch as we are familiar with, had no existence in the emple: see the next section.

It has, however, been maintained by Hengstenberg, euss, R. Smend, Baethgen, and Cheyne, that we have in ese Psalms not many voices uttering the sentiments of any individuals, but one voice, that of the Jewish comunity. Smend has written an elaborate essay on the bject[1], and in it he enunciates the following principle: e 'I' Psalms must all be interpreted as congregational nless exegesis makes this impossible. On the other nd, Nöldeke in the same publication[2] puts forth the ntrary principle; every 'I' Psalm is to be interpreted individual unless exegesis makes this impossible. unkel makes Nöldeke's opinion his own. It is this last ew that was defended by Nöldeke's teacher Ewald, and it is supported by Duhm and Dr. James Robertson. The last named has an interesting and able treatment of the subject in his *Croall Lectures*[1]. Hupfeld refuses to admit that any of the 'I' Psalms are congregational, though Ps. cxxix and some other Psalms of the group are obviously of that kind. In a later utterance Smend denies that the three or four 'I' Psalms admitted in his Essay to be individual are other than congregational.

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[1] Stade's *Old Testament Magazine*, 1888, pp. 49–147.

[2] Ib. 1900, p. 92 f.

It will not be doubted by any one that, in the O.T., nations are personified and addressed in the singular. See Num. xx. 18, xxi. 22; Deut. ii. 27-29; Judges i. 3, ix. 19; Zech. vii. 3, viii. 2. See on cv. In these cases, however, the personification is manifest, and quite in keeping with ordinary literary usage. But it is a very different thing to say that in some eighty Psalms, full of subjectivity, crammed with deep feeling and spontaneity, the 'I' is not the poet, but a kind of impersonal society either political or religious—on this last matter opinion varies. When in the Psalm some 'I' complains of cruel and treacherous conduct on the part of foes, it is the Jewish nation, or the faithful part of that nation, that is expressing its sorrow, pain, and sometimes indignation at the treatment received from hostile heathen nations (Reuss) or from faithless Jews who have made common cause with the Babylonians, the Samaritans, or the Syrians. To say the least, such an extension of the meanings of 'I' and 'me' is very unnatural, and is to be allowed only in obedience to very imperious demands. What are the grounds on which this explanation rests? The principal are these.

1. The Psalter is said to be the prayer-book of the post-exilic temple, and its constituent Psalms were composed primarily and immediately for use in the temple. Now Smend and others take this for granted, but no conclusive evidence for it has yet been put forward. It may be, as most moderns agree, that our Psalter took on

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[1] *The Poetry and the Religion of the Psalms*, chap. xi, &c.

its present form to meet the needs of temple worship after the Exile, and it may be also admitted that the individual Psalms are nearly all, if not all, of post-exilic date. But judging from the Psalter itself, and from the analogy of later hymns, Jewish and Christian, it seems much likelier that the bulk of the Psalms came from private authors, and that, originally, they were individual utterances. The hymns of Cowper and Charles Wesley were, in the first instance, with but few exceptions, prompted by what their authors thought and felt: they have been incorporated in our congregational Psalmodies because these Christian poets had an experience that is representative. It should be remembered that the Psalms were made for private use as well as for public worship. Ps. cxix was not made to be sung, and the same is probably true of other Psalms.

2. Cheyne (*O. P.*[1] and *Com.*(2)[2]) sees an objection to the individualistic interpretation of the 'I' Psalms in the fact that the sense of individuality was not developed among the Jews until late times. But if the Psalms are as late as Smend and Cheyne make them out to be, this sense of individuality had shown itself in the nation before any of the Psalms were composed, for it is reflected in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, not to mention the Wisdom Literature (Prov., Eccles.), in which it figures largely.

3. Smend says that the claim made in the 'I' Psalms to personal integrity and innocence can be understood only if we assume that the community, and not an individual, is speaking. But such claims are usually put forth as reasons why God should not afflict the writer, and what they amount to is the plea that no sin deserving the suffering endured has been committed: see lix. 3, and cf. xliv. 17 ff. A similar claim is set up by Job in the eplies he makes to his friends; but Smend has his doubts as to whether 'Job' also is not the personified nation.

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[1] p. 265.

[2] i, lxiv ff.

4. It has been pointed out as an argument for this view that in the same Psalms 'I' and 'we' often come together: e.g. Pss. xx, xxii. The 'we,' it is said, interprets the 'I.' Now the fact that both 'I' and 'we' are employed in the same context would seem to show that they have a different connotation. If the 'I' has the same meaning as the 'we' the latter would be used all through. When a poet is animated by emotions and aspirations which he knows to be the common stock of cultured and religious men, he is very apt to drop into the 'we,' identifying himself for the time with his fellows. In some cases, without dropping the 'I' and 'me,' he may feel conscious of being the mouthpiece of others. Thus Tennyson wrote of the 'In Memoriam': '"I" is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him.'[1] Yet in the 'In Memoriam' Tennyson expressed what he himself believed and felt, though he happened at the same time to be voicing the beliefs and emotions of the race.

It cannot be denied that many of the Psalms, some even of the 'I' Psalms, have a liturgical origin: they were made primarily for purposes of social worship, and it is natural to think that in them the congregation or the nation speaks. Many of these are compilations[2], and in the original context the 'I' had probably its strict force.

Smend and Cheyne call attention to the fact that in the choruses of some of the greatest Greek dramas the 'I' is used though it stands for the choir. But this feature is quite exceptional, and if it were common it would have little bearing upon the present case, which is that of lyrics with all the features of personal lyrics, yet interpreted by Smend, Cheyne, and others as the utterance of a society and not of individuals.

Isa. lii. 12–liii, the well-known 'servant' passage, is adduced as confirmation of the congregational interpretation of the 'I' Psalms, because in that section the nation is portrayed as one individual. But this is hardly analogous with songs articulated in the first person. Moreover, the principal 'servant' passages in Isaiah are thought by Cheyne and most recent scholars to be excerpts introduced into their present context from an independent poem now lost as such. We know too little what these passages meant when first composed to be able safely to draw conclusions from them. There are many considerations which favour the natural interpretation of the 'I' in the Psalms now under consideration, though Psalm cxxix and some others are exceptions.

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[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 305.

[2] cxxxv f.

1. In many of these Psalms no other interpretation is possible. Take the following examples:—

'For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But Jehovah will take me up,' xxvii. 10.

'Violent witnesses rise up: They ask me of things I know not,' xxxv. 11.

'Behold I was shapen in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me,' li. 5.

'But it was not an enemy that reproached me; . . . but it was thou, a man mine equal, and my familiar friend,' lv. 12-14.

'I am become a stranger unto my brethren, And an alien unto my mother's children,' lxix. 8.

'Cast me not off in the time of old age; Forsake me not when my strength faileth,' lxxi. 9.

'O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; Give thy trength unto thy servant, And save the son of thine handmaid,' lxxxvi. 16.

'At midnight I will arise and give thanks unto thee,' xix. 62.

Further reference may be made to xxii. 22, 25: how ould the congregation or the nation make vows, and in what way was it possible for it to praise God in the midst f itself?

All the so-called 'sickness Psalms' supply strong evidence of the same kind: e. g. vi, xxii, xxx, xxxviii, xli, lxix, lxxxviii, cii.

2. In other lyrics articulated in the first person no doubt is felt or has been expressed that the poetry is the utterance of the poet's mind.

3. These Psalms have such spontaneity and intensity of feeling as to make it almost certain that they are the genuine outcome of individual experience. The attitude of the writers is not objective but strongly subjective: they express the thoughts and feelings by which they themselves were swayed. If we reduce them to the level of mere spokesmen, hired to put into singable form the prevailing sentiments, we rob the Psalms in question of their reality and force. It is the individual character of the Psalms which has been, in all ages, their charm, and which makes them an unfailing source of comfort and encouragement to men struggling with sickness, sin, or outward foes. The God who was the refuge and strength of these ancient saints is still that, and, in Jesus Christ, even more, to tried and tempted ones in our own time. The natural expression which comes to a reader is likely to be the right one, and there can be no mistake as to what the impression is on the great majority of readers. To empty these Psalms of their individual character is to take from them their chief religious element. They become then, as Smend as good as admits, sectarian, or, at most, political poems, though, of course, charged with the theocratic spirit. They body forth the anguish of the persecuted party or nation, and contain prayers that Jehovah may defend His own people: but the element of personal religion is practically expunged.

The Church in all ages has seen in these songs the heartfelt cries of pious souls of the olden time. They express the deepest sense of sin, the desire for pardon and a faith in God, which has rarely been equalled and never surpassed. They were sung in the temple, and they are sung in the modern Synagogue and in the Church because they voice the convictions and aspirations of all ages.

Smend eliminates from other O. T. songs their individual character, as e. g. Miriam's song (Ex. xv), Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 1 foll.), Hezekiah's prayer (Isa. xxxviii. 10-20), and Habakkuk's Psalm (Hab. iii). Now the question is not whether these poems were composed by those with whose names they are associated, but whether the original reference in them is personal or national.

6. Sacred Music among the Ancient Hebrews.

It is surprising how meagre our information is regarding the music of the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Hebrews. This is largely due to the fact that no system of notation in use among these ancient peoples has come to us, for our present systems of musical notation are of comparatively recent invention, the old notation being generally ascribed to Guido d'Arezzo (d. 1050). There are good grounds for concluding that the melody of the ancient Hebrews was of a simple, elementary, and variable kind, such as obtains among Oriental peoples of our own time. We owe our fixed unvarying melody to musical script, just as fixed spelling is due, largely, to the printing press. Among the Arabs of Egypt and Palestine the same tune is sung with considerable variation in details though with general agreement, and it is seldom that Arabic music goes outside the octave. There is among the same people a great fondness for loud, shrill, clanging sounds: it is the quantity of sound and not its quality that tells. Hence it is that the drum and other instruments of percussion are much favoured in the East. The kind of music thus briefly described is that which, in all probability, obtained among the Hebrews in Bible times, for in the unchanging East one may safely argue from the present to the past within reasonable limits.

Neither harmony nor counterpoint was known until some time on in the Middle Ages: one may therefore conclude, with fair confidence, that these characteristics of mediaeval and modern music were absent from the music of the Bible. The lack of these was made up to some extent by a large use of antiphony, different parts of the poem being sung by different persons[1]. Thus in Ps. cxxxvi the first part of each verse would be sung by the whole choir, the second by a part of it. See Introduction to Pss. cxv, cxviii. Variety of voice and of instrumental sound ('timbre') was another thing that helped to fill up the place now held by harmony and counterpoint. Cicero says of the ancient Egyptians that 'they considered the arts of singing and playing upon musical instruments a very principal part of learning[2]': there is no evidence that this was the case among the early Hebrews, though music of some kind was traced by this people to a very remote period in the past[3].

Musical Instruments.

In primitive times musical instruments were played to the accompaniment of the voice, but rarely, if at all, for their own sake as we now play the piano, violin, &c. Wind instruments do seem, however, to have been blown for certain purposes, as in summoning to war, announcing the advent of a festival, &c., but even these were hardly used by themselves for musical purposes.

Our only direct contemporary evidence with regard to the musical instruments of the Bible is that which the Bible itself supplies. This is often so meagre and indecisive that without the aid of pictorial representation it is often impossible to make clear to ourselves what were the forms and what the uses of these instruments. In Madden's *Coins of the Jews*[4] illustrations of some stringed instruments in vogue among the Jews are given: these are taken from Jewish coins of about B.C. 66–70, so that they do not carry us back very far. The monuments of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia supply us with a goodly number of pictures of instruments used among the peoples of these countries, and since these are very similar it is exceedingly likely that the Jews had instruments closely resembling those of their neighbours.

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[1] See Psalms xiii, xx, xxxviii, lxviii, lxxxix, &c.

[2] *Tusc. Quest*, lib. i.

[3] Gen. iv. 21

[4] Second edition, 1885.

The musical instruments mentioned in the Bible are thus classified:—

1. Wind instruments.
2. Stringed instruments.
3. Instruments of percussion.

Examples of each of these three classes may be seen in Ps. cl.

Of the wind instruments associated with modern worship no one is so important as the organ: but, though the word occurs four times in the A.V.[1], it is demonstrable that what we call the 'organ' did not exist for some centuries after the Christian era set in, because at no earlier time was the device of the keyboard known. For 'organ' the R. V. substitutes 'pipe'; the Hebrew word (*'Ugab*) means a wind instrument of some kind. See on Ps. cl. 4. Stringed instruments are of the harp and of the violin kind. In the former the strings are fastened at the ends alone, and have no sounding-board to which they are attached. In the case of the violin class of instruments there is a sounding-board across which the strings are stretched, as e.g. in the lute, guitar, violin, &c.

In the O. T. it is the stringed instruments that are almost exclusively associated with worship, and of these three only are mentioned, all of the harp kind, viz. the harp, lyre, and trigon. In the E.VV. the words used are psaltery, harp, and sackbut, respectively. The above rendering gives the results to which the present writer has been brought by a somewhat careful examination of the available evidence, though lack of space makes it impossible to discuss the question in this commentary. The 'trigon' (E.VV. 'sackbut') is mentioned in Dan. iii. 5, 7, 10, 15, and was probably a triangular instrument of the harp kind, but having four strings only. The other two stringed instruments, Heb. *nebel* and *kinnor*, are frequently named in the Psalter, and in our English versions are translated 'psaltery' and 'harp' respectively. By the former our translators seem to have meant a kind of lute with convex belly, a mistake due to the supposed etymology of the word. But there is good reason for concluding that no instrument of the violin kind was known among the Hebrews, and, moreover, the *nebel* was heavier and larger than the *kinnor*, for the latter could be hung on poplar (or willow ?) trees[1]. Both were made of wood[2], and both were portable[3]. In Ps. xxxiii. 2 mention is made of a *nebel* of ten strings, implying that the number of strings varied, though some think that in this passage a separate instrument of ten strings is meant. See on the verse in vol. i.

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[1] Gen. iv. 21; Job xxi. 12, xxx. 31; Ps. cl. 4.

The word 'psaltery' in the E.VV. is from the Greek *psalterion* which generally stands for *nebel* in the LXX; but this word means strictly a stringed instrument of any kind: in English, however, the word came to have a more specific meaning: see above. 'Harp' is the best English word for *nebel*, and 'lyre' for *kinnor*. In the latter the strings were fastened at the ends only, as in the case of the harp, but the instrument was smaller, the number of strings were fewer, and these strings were stretched usually in a vertical, though sometimes in a horizontal, direction. See the illustrations.

Of the wind instruments reference will be made to two only, viz. the *shofar* or ram's horn, and the *khetsotsera* or trumpet, which are, in this volume, called 'cornet' and 'trumpet' respectively. It is a pity that the English versions do not represent each by a distinct word (as in the R. V. might especially have been expected), instead of confusing the mere English reader by translating the two Hebrew words by 'trumpet,' except where both words occur in the same connexion, 'cornet' and 'trumpet' being then employed as above. In four cases the Hebrew word for horn is translated 'cornet,' rightly in so far as the meaning is concerned, though in ten other passages the same word is rendered 'horn' ('raising the horn,' &c.).

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[1] See Ps. cxxxvii. 2.
[2] 1 Kings x. 12.
[3] 1 Sam. x. 5; 2 Chron. xx. 28.

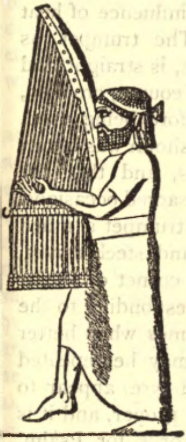

FIG. 1.
Assyrian Harp.

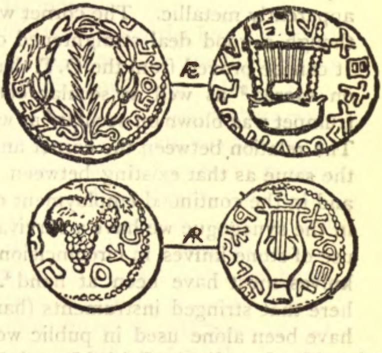

FIG. 2. Jewish Lyres (from Jewish coins of dates B.C. 70–66). See Madden's *Coins of the Jews*(2), pp. 231, 243.

The shophar or cornet is simply the primitive form of the metallic trumpet, and served the same purposes, though some have tried to show that the cornet was used on secular occasions[1], the trumpet having a specially religious use. But it is in the later literature of the O.T. that matters of ritual, music, and the like are dealt with, and in the later time the trumpet takes the place of the shofar. It may be gathered from Rabbinical authorities that in later times the word 'shofar' came to be used for the straight metallic trumpet. The Mishna permits the use in the synagogue of the horn of any clean animal except the cow, but from the earliest times the synagogue prefers the ram's horn, which under the influence of heat is flattened and otherwise adapted. The trumpet, as represented on the arch of Titus in Rome, is straight and apparently metallic. The cornet was, of course, crooked, though a good deal straightened out before being used. It can be proved from the O.T. that the shofar was blown on sacred[2] as well as secular occasions, and that the trumpet was blown on secular[3] as well as sacred occasions. The relation between the cornet and the trumpet is much the same as that existing between flint and steel knives, and in the continued employment of the cornet or shofar in the synagogue we have a survival corresponding to the use of stone knives in circumcision at times when better knives must have been at hand[4]. It may be repeated here that stringed instruments (harp and lyre) appear to have been alone used in public worship proper, and it is significant of this that the technical words for Psalm, Greek and perhaps Hebrew, mean a song or hymn to be sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. But see Introduction, p. 3 f.

The function of the harp and lyre was to keep the time rather than to supplement the voices. Indeed, it is the sense of rhythm rather than that of melody which makes for the Oriental the principal charm of music. This sense lies nearest the primitive instincts (cf. respiration and circulation of blood, both rhythmic movements), and it is a leading feature in poetry (cf. Hebrew parallelism) and in the dance.

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[1] Judges iii. 27; 1 Sam. xiii. 3 ff.; 2 Sam. xv. 10; Amos iii. 6.
[2] Lev. xxv. 9, 13; Joshua vi. 5; 2 Sam. vi. 15.
[3] 2 Kings xi. 14; Hos. v. 8.
[4] Joshua v. 2.

Many and bitter have been the discussions in the Christian Church as to the propriety or otherwise of introducing musical instruments (organ, violin, &c.) into our churches to help the worship. The Fathers, and also the Anglican Church—judged by its homilies—pronounced a negative opinion, and the Puritans were strongly opposed to any except vocal worship in churches. Modern churches of all creeds seem to have settled down to a contrary view, and there are few places of worship to-day without either organ or harmonium.

Where was worship conducted among the Israelites? At all the sanctuaries of the land, as much at the high places as at the temple, until in the time of Josiah[1] (d. B.C. 609), or perhaps in that of Hezekiah (d. B.C. 699)[2], these were condemned and suppressed. Since no one was allowed to enter the house or the temple proper, except the priests, one has to dismiss the idea that Psalms were sung in the sacred structure itself. In the first temple there was but one court[3], and it must have been in this that the singers and players led the worship of the people on Sabbaths and festivals. In the second temple there were an inner and an outer court, and since, during the existence of that emple the singers and players belonged to the Levites but see below) in the main if not wholly, it is extremely ikely that the choir and the orchestra or band took up heir position in the court of the Israelites.

Who were the musicians, those who sang and those ho played the instruments? Though our data for udging of the methods of worship in vogue among the

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[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 9.

[2] 2 Kings xviii. 1 ff.; Isa. xxxvi. 7: see, however, Marti on he latter verse.

[3] See Article 'Temple' (by the present writer) in Hastings' *ictionary of the Bible.*

Jews before the Exile are slight, there seems good reason for concluding that there was no distinct class of musicians, no musical guild or order. The choir and band were made up of picked men[1] (no women of course), though these would be very often priests and Levites. The set of influences which led to the increased power of the priests and to the enlargement of their order by the addition to them of the Levites issued in having the functions of sacred song limited to the Levites. This last is the state of things which seems to have prevailed during the whole period represented by the Psalter. But though the lay Israelite might not take part in temple music he was supposed to share in it vicariously, as is the case with women in the modern synagogue.

It has to be remembered, however, that our Psalm book is not merely a collection of the hymns sung in the temple area. Many of them could not have been sung at all anywhere, as e.g. Ps. cxix, which was probably composed to be read privately; Ps. cxiii f., which seem to have been chanted in the family circle; Ps. cxli and others appear to have been intended for use by individuals. See also lix. 16, xcii. 2, cxix. 62. It cannot be conceived that male Israelites who were not priests or Levites worshipped at the three annual feasts at Jerusalem alone, and then only by proxy. Nor is it likely that Israelitish women were wholly excluded from participation in the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.

The synagogue was, until after the final destruction of the temple, a mere place of instruction, in which the scriptures were read and expounded, but no worship was carried on. There must have been united and individual worship in Jewish homes, and in that worship the Psalms played, it is highly probable, a larger part than it is the custom to think.

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[1] See 2 Sam. vi. 5; Isa. xxx. 29; Amos vi. 21–23.

ABBREVIATIONS.

1. GENERAL.

acc. = accusative.
fem. = feminine.
gen. = genitive.
Hiph. = Hiph'il.
impf. = imperfect.
impv. = imperative.
masc. = masculine.
Ni. = Niph'al.
pass. = passive.
perf. = perfect.
Pi. = Pi'el.
prep. = preposition.
pron. = pronoun.
DB. = Dictionary of the Bible (Hastings).
Encyc. Bib. = Encyclopaedia Biblica.

Hiph., Ni., and Pi. denote forms of the Hebrew verb which express (most commonly) the following modifications of the simple idea of the verb (i.e. the Qal): causative, passive, and intensive—respectively.

J (Jahwist), E (Elohist), JE (Jehovist), D (Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly Writer) stand for the authors of the documents on which the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) is supposed to be chiefly based.

2. TEXTS AND VERSIONS.

1. HEBREW.

M.T. = Massoretic Text. (That of the ordinary vocalized Hebrew Bible.)
eth. = kethib. (The consonants and the implied vowels of the Hebrew Bible.)
r. = qĕrē. (The text as emended by the Massorites.)
eb. = Hebrew.

2. GREEK.

XX = The Septuagint.
q. = Aquila.
heod. = Theodotion.
ym. = Symmachus.

3. LATIN.

ero. = Jerome.
ulg. = Vulgate (on the Psalms, a mere translation of the LXX).

4. ENGLISH.

P. B. V. = Prayer Book Version.
A. V. = Authorized Version.
R. V. = Revised Version.
E.VV. = All these three English versions.
A. R. V. = A. V. and R. V.
O. T. = Old Testament.
N. T. = New Testament.

The (*Saadias*) Arabic (*Ar*) and Ethiopic (*Eth*) versions have been consulted, and are occasionally referred to. The Peshitta (Syriac) and Targum (Aramaic) have been continually used.

3. Commentaries.

The following notes alone are here necessary.

Ewald = the 2nd Edition of his Commentary.
Cheyne O. P. = the Bampton Lectures on the *Origin of the Psalter.*
Cheyne ⁽¹⁾ = *The Book of Psalms* (1888).
Cheyne ⁽²⁾ = *The Book of Psalms* (1904).
Gunkel = *Ausgewählte Psalmen erklärt und übersetzt* (1904).

The three editions of Hupfeld, the fourth (German) of Delitzsch, the second and third of Baethgen have been used. Unless the contrary is indicated, it may be assumed that the latest edition of each work is cited. When it is necessary to distinguish editions bracketed numerals are employed : see Cheyne ⁽¹⁾, &c., above.

The author wishes to thank his former pupil, Vice-Principal G. V. Stonehouse, M.A., of Coates Hall, Edinburgh, and his Assistant Colleague, Mr. P. G. Thomas, M.A. (Assistant Lecturer in English), for reading the proofs.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII — CL

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

LXXIII—CL

BOOK III.

For general remarks concerning the formation of the Psalter and the division into five books see pp. 4 f., 37 f., 127 f., and vol. i. p. 6 ff.

Books II and III were at first apparently a miscellaneous collection containing within itself several minor collections of which the following may be noted.

1. *Davidic Psalms*, li–lxxii.

2. *Levitical groups*, viz. Korahitic and Asaphic.

Books II and III are almost wholly Elohistic. Books I, IV, and V are, on the other hand, Yahwistic. In Pss. xlii–lxxxiii Elohim occurs 200 times, Yahweh forty-three. In lxxxiv–lxxxix Elohim is found ten times alone and four times in combination with Yahweh; the latter being found thirty-six times. For the difference between these two Divine names see vol. i. 358 f., and cf. the note in this vol. on cviii. 3.

Asaph Psalms. Ps. lxxiii is the first of the eleven Asaph Psalms in Book III, Ps. l (Book II) being the only other one. No doubt these twelve formed a collection which originated and was used among the members of the Levitical guild of Asaph. That authorship is not implied by 'A Psalm of Asaph' seems shown by the title 'A Psalm of (or belonging to) the Korahites,' found before Pss. lxxxiv f. and nine other Psalms. We have no Biblical information at all concerning an individual called Asaph or of his descendants outside the books Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah (which formed originally but one Hebrew book arranged in the order just given), the more strictly historical books —Samuel and Kings—being quite silent about them. According to Chronicles—Asaph, Heman and Ethan were chosen by the Levites to conduct the music when David brought up the ark to Jerusalem[1]. David is said to have appointed Asaph to take charge of the music after the ark had been fixed[2]. Under their father's superintendence Asaph's sons presided over the twenty-four courses of musicians[3], and they took part in the dedication of the temple[4]. All these intimations, however, occur in a book

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[1] 1 Chron. xv. 16–19.

[2] 1 Chron. xvi. 4 f., 37.

[3] 1 Chron. xvi. 1 ff.

[4] 2 Chron. vi. 12.

73 A Psalm of Asaph.

1 Surely God is good to Israel,

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written for other than historical purposes, a book not older than B. C. 300, though the period described above is about seven hundred years earlier. In the time of the writer there were Levitical guilds called Asaph, Heman, Ethan, and Korah, and the individual names were, in the manner of ancient times, invented to account for the existence of the guilds thus designated. The musical arrangements ascribed to David's time in Chronicles could not, for many reasons, have existed so early.

PSALM LXXIII.

Theme. The problem presented by the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous, and its solution through faith in God.

I. *Contents.* (1) The problem, verses 1–14. The poet contrasts God's general dealings with His people and his own recent suffering (verses 1–3), and then passes on to speak of the prosperity and pride of the wicked (verses 4–9) and the evil effect of their example (verses 10–14).

(2) The solution of the problem, verses 15–28. He seeks an oracle from God in the temple, and obtains a satisfactory answer (verses 15–20). He confesses the folly of his previous reasoning, for in the end it will be ill with the wicked and well with the righteous (verses 21–28).

II. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm to connect it definitely with any one period.

That it is not pre-exilic is proved by the style of the Hebrew, which is in parts late, and by the problem raised in the Psalm, the happy lot of the wicked in this world and the misery of the good. This problem did not exist for the pre-exilic mind, or at least found no expression. The Psalm is not exilic, for the writer is at Jerusalem and the temple is in existence (verse 17).

The problem of the present Psalm is that of Pss. xxxvii, xlix, and xciv, and also of Job, and in a modified form of Eccles., all of which are post-exilic. This Psalm may have been composed under the stress of the persecution of the Samaritan party in Nehemiah's day, or it may owe its existence to the Syrian persecution of the Maccabean age. But such problems as the one that here confronts the Psalmist may occur to a thoughtful mind at any time.

1–14. *The prosperity of the wicked.*

1. Render : 'God is only good to the upright one,
Even Jehovah to the pure in heart.'

Even to such as are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet were almost gone; 2
My steps had well nigh slipped.
For I was envious at the arrogant, 3
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
For there are no bands in their death: 4
But their strength is firm.
They are not in trouble as *other* men; 5
Neither are they plagued like *other* men.
Therefore pride is as a chain about their neck; 6

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good: i. e. 'kind,' as in lxxxvi. 5.

to Israel: read, 'to the upright one': the Hebrew differs very little.

2. Render: 'But as for me my feet were very near giving way: There was, as it were, nothing to prevent my steps from slipping.'

Though he now admits the general principle that God is kind and only kind to the upright, yet his own unhappy lot had almost led him to fall away from faith in the Divine love.

3 ff. give the grounds for the shock to faith described in verse 2.

3. envious. The construction of the verb proves that it is properly rendered in the R. V.: so xxxvii. 1. Wellhausen's rendering 'indignant' is excluded by the preposition in Hebrew.

arrogant: we should probably render 'fools,' understanding the word in its ethical sense, as in v. 6, lxxv. 5.

4. Render: 'For they have no pangs,
Sound and fat is their body.'

bands: this word must be assumed, like another Hebrew word (*Khebel*), to have the double meaning, bands and torments: here the latter.

in their death: dividing the Hebrew letters differently, as should be done, we obtain the above rendering.

strength: the Hebrew word, occurring here only, means, according to an Arabic cognate, 'body.'

5. Render: 'They are not in (such) trouble as (other) men; Nor are they smitten (of God) as the (rest of) the human race.'

plagued: the Hebrew word means being smitten of God: see verse 14; Isa. liii. 4.

6. Render: 'Therefore (because more happily situated than

Violence covereth them as a garment.
7 Their eyes stand out with fatness:
They have more than heart could wish.
8 They scoff, and in wickedness utter oppression:
They speak loftily.
9 They have set their mouth in the heavens,
And their tongue walketh through the earth.
10 Therefore his people return hither:

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other men), pride (is made to) adorn them as a necklace: The garment of violence clothes them.'

These people take pride in their pride: violence is as present to them as the clothes they wear.

7. Render: 'Their iniquity issues from fatness (of hearts): The imaginings of (their) heart overflow' (becoming violent speeches).

eyes: read (with LXX, Pesh., and most moderns) 'iniquity'—making a very slight change in the Hebrew.

fatness: i. e. grossness of heart: see xvii. 10.

8. Render: 'They give themselves to mocking and utter evil (things): From their (assumed) lofty place they utter wicked (*lit.* perverted: i. e. from the right) things.'

in wickedness: read evil (things).

oppression: translate, 'what is perverted'; so 'what is wicked,' following Aramaic usage.

they utter: they speak: in the Hebrew the same verb is used: it often means 'to speak inwardly,' 'to meditate,' 'scheme.'

9. The sense of the verse is: 'They blaspheme God, and go about in the earth slandering men.' So the ancient versions, Baethgen.

in the heavens: render: 'against God': the Hebrew preposition often means 'against'; 'heavens,' or rather 'heaven' (the Hebrew word is always pl.), means 'God,' as in Rabbinical Hebrew: cf. 'Heaven helps those who help themselves.'

10. If we retain the M. T. we must render: 'Therefore (as a result of their arrogant speech against God and man) their people (those subject to them, i. e. the Israelites), turn thither (to the wicked party, adopting their principles), and (in a dry land) water in full measure is drained by them.' But the text is obviously corrupt; making a few changes we obtain this rendering: 'Nevertheless they (= the wicked) have bread enough, and water in abundance is drained by them.'

The uncorrected Hebrew text (*keth.*) yields this rendering only: 'Therefore He will bring back' (or 'turn') 'His people hither' (or 'thither'): i. e. to Palestine.

And waters of a full *cup* are wrung out by them.
And they say, How doth God know? 11
And is there knowledge in the Most High?
Behold, these are the wicked; 12
And, being alway at ease, they increase in riches.
Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart, 13
And washed my hands in innocency;
For all the day long have I been plagued, 14
And chastened every morning.

Therefore: read the similar Aramaic word for 'nevertheless.'

11. The speakers are those described in the foregoing verses, —the wicked.

How doth God know? better, 'how *can* God know?'

12–14. *The Psalmist is the speaker.* Formerly these verses were ascribed to faithless Israelites who had been induced to adopt the principles of their oppressors, an interpretation based on a wrong translation of verse 10, that based on the M. T.

12. these: i. e. 'such,' as in Job xviii. 21: cf. Ps. viii. 19; Isa. lxvi. 11. The wicked are such as have been described: they are prosperous though God-defiant.

13 f. The conclusion which the writer draws from the fact that the wicked prosper while the righteous are afflicted. It is to no purpose that the good life is lived, for the contrary life pays best. The fact that the writer or those he speaks for continued to walk in the good way proves that this way was regarded as the right one though it led to suffering; yet it reveals the belief of the time that even here and now virtue is rewarded. Jero. makes verses 13 f., as Luther verse 13, interrogative.

13. Surely: the Hebrew word has probably here, as it has in verse 1, its restrictive meaning 'only': 'It can issue only in nothing that I have cleansed,' &c.

have I cleansed my heart: i. e. purified my thoughts and feelings. In the Psychology of the Hebrews the heart is usually regarded as the seat of thought and feeling; cf. Prov. xx. 9.

And washed my hands in innocency: cf. Ps. xxvi. 6. There is a reference to the custom of washing the hands as a sign of being innocent, clean, with regard to some supposed guilt: see Deut. xxi. 6 f.; Matt. xxvii. 24. The Psalmist had kept himself free from both the thought and the act of sin.

14. plagued: visited by a Divine affliction: see on verse 5.

15 If I had said, I will speak thus;
Behold, I had dealt treacherously with the generation of
thy children.
16 When I thought how I might know this,
It was too painful for me;
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God,
And considered their latter end.
18 Surely thou settest them in slippery places:
Thou castest them down to destruction.

15–28. *In the sanctuary the scales fall from his eyes. The mystery is at length solved. In the end it will be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked.*

15. Render: 'I said: I will speak such things: Behold, I have been (in saying that) false to the generation of my people.'

If I had said: the Hebrew word for 'if' is due to dittography, and must be omitted. He had said this.

'said': i.e. inwardly: so often in Hebrew.

16. Render: 'So I set about thinking as to how I might understand this (thing): (but the conclusion I came to was that the problem) was, in my estimation, weariness.'

When I thought: this translation assumes the change of one vowel in the Hebrew word, the conjunction being then changed from weak to strong *waw*. But the received text yields the excellent meaning 'So I began to think,' or, as above—'So I set about thinking,' &c.

too painful: Heb. 'it was wearying,' 'tiresome.' The original word is a noun (*'Āmāl*) used often in Eccles. for the toil that is dull, uninteresting, unprofitable, yet exhausting.

17. Until I went, &c.: rather, 'Until I entered,' &c. The ancient versions have the future owing to a misunderstanding of the Hebrew idiom.

the sanctuary of God. It was believed among the ancients that by sleeping in a temple the god of the place revealed secrets to the sleeper. See Isa. lxv. 4. Jehovah met the Psalmist in the temple, and opened his eyes to see His real purpose in regard to the wicked and the righteous.

their latter end: *lit.* 'what is after.' There is no thought here of the life beyond death.

18–20. *The fate of the wicked described.*

18. Surely: the Hebrew word may have the restrictive sense 'only,' as in verses 1, 13.

destruction: the Hebrew is plural of intensity, 'utter ruin.'

How are they become a desolation in a moment ! 19
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
As a dream when one awaketh ; 20
So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their
image.
For my heart was grieved, 21
And I was pricked in my reins :

The Hebrew word, which is peculiar, occurs also in lxxiv. 3. The meaning 'delusion,' though supported by Duhm and favoured by the M. T., does not suit the latter passage.

19. Render : 'How as in a moment are they undone' (*lit.* 'do they become a desolation') ! 'They come to a full end through their dire calamities.'

20. Render : 'They shall be as a dream when one wakes : When Thou rousest Thyself Thou shalt despise their image.'

Lord: the Hebrew word is that read for Yahweh (Jehovah[1]). The latter was almost certainly the earlier word, and this again took the place of the almost identically spelt verb rendered above 'they shall be' (singular for plural).

To make the comparison perfect it should be said that the wicked perish when God rouses Himself, just as dreams vanish after waking.

when thou awakest: a different verb from the preceding one : render as above : 'When thou rousest thyself.' The same Hebrew letters mean also 'in the city' (i. e. Jerusalem or heaven), and in the LXX, Pesh., Jero. this is the rendering adopted. But parallelism and sense support the other rendering.

21 f. The Psalmist acknowledges his error, and rebukes himself for questioning the correctness of the Divine rule.

21 contains the protasis or condition of a compound sentence, verse 22 supplying the apodosis.

Render verse 21 f. : '21 When my heart (= I myself) was embittered, And I felt myself bitten at my reins, 22 Then was I stupid as a brute, having no knowledge : I was a downright beast towards thee.'

If with the R. V. we begin verse 21 with **For** and not 'when,' verses 21 f. must then be regarded as continuing the thought of the foregoing words : but in that case the connexion is a rather loose one.

was grieved: Heb. 'was soured' or 'embittered.'

pricked: the Hebrew verb is probably a denominative from

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[1] See on cviii. 3.

22 So brutish was I, and ignorant;
I was *as* a beast before thee.
23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee:
Thou hast holden my right hand.
24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.

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the noun = 'tooth.' 'I was toothed,' i. e. the pain I felt was comparable to that of being bitten.

reins (= kidneys): supposed to be the seat of the emotions: see Ps. vii. 9, xvi. 7; Job xix. 26; Prov. xxiii. 16.

22. ***as* a beast:** Heb. 'as a behemoth,' the word used in Job xl. 15 ff. for the hippopotamus, and until recently thought to be an Egyptian word. Here it is simply the plural of intensity of the ordinary Hebrew word for beast (usually a domestic beast, cattle, &c.). So 'a very beast' (Driver).

before thee: Delitzsch's rendering 'in comparison with thee' has no support in either Hebrew or in Arabic, notwithstanding his statements to the contrary.

23-26. True satisfaction is to be found in God. Having Him other things can be dispensed with. This is the true solution of the problem suggested by the prosperity of the wicked. They miss the best, the one thing needful and the only thing that is really indispensable.

23. To hold the right hand means to help in all plans and achievements: see xvi. 8.

24. guide: the same verb as in xxiii. 3, 'He leadeth me,' &c. 'Thou wilt lead (direct) me into thy plan' (for me), i. e. make me walk in the way devised for me by thee.

afterward: the Hebrew word is generally used as a prep., and Ewald and Hitzig so regard it here: 'Thou takest me after (= towards) honour.' But the adverbial sense is well supported in the O. T., see Gen. x. 18, xviii. 5, &c., and it gives the best sense and the best Hebrew here.

receive me to glory: the Hebrew word for 'receive' is used in the sense of taking along with, conducting towards some goal: see Gen. xlviii. 1; Exod. xii. 32, xiv. 6; Num. xxiii. 27, &c. Parallelism as well as the connexion favours this meaning here: see verses 23 f. 'Thou layest hold of my right hand: Thou guidest me into thy planned course of life, and, after thus guiding me, thou conductest me to honour.' In the end, at all events, the good man comes to his own, being honoured, and not, as before, despised.

There does not seem to be any allusion to the life beyond death

Whom have I in heaven *but thee*? 25
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth: 26
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.
For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: 27
Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.
But it is good for me to draw near unto God: 28
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
That I may tell of all thy works.

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here or in xlix. 15, though the contrary is maintained by most expositors, Jewish and Christian.

25. ***but thee*:** render 'beside thee.' The Hebrew word so rendered must be restored, its omission being due to the double occurrence of the same word with only one letter in Hebrew between.

26. flesh and **heart** embrace the whole man, including the physical and the mental. The word heart is to be taken in the Kantian sense of 'mind,' embracing all mental power, emotional, intellectual, and volitional.

faileth: i. e. not come to an end, but become enfeebled, as of fading grass (Isa. xv. 6), of flesh (Job xxxiii. 21), of vital strength (Ps. lxxi. 11), of man's spirit (Ps. cxliii. 7).

the strength of my heart: rather, 'the rock of my heart' (of my inner being): what I myself stand securely on. Duhm expunges these words on the ground that in the previous clause the heart is supposed to have come to a complete end: but his inference rests on a wrong translation: see above.

my portion: cf. xvi. 5.

27 f. confirm what is stated on verse 26. The wicked perish. I find in Jehovah a refuge from all ills: He is my eternal portion.

27. they that are far, &c.: i. e. do not approach thee in worship: or have no fellowship with thee.

that go a whoring: faithlessness to Jehovah is conceived under the figure of harlotry, see cvi. 39; Exod. xxxiv. 15 f.; Deut. xxxi. 16; Hos. ii. 7, iv. 15; Isa. lvii. 3.

28. good: i. e. not in the moral sense, 'right,' 'proper': the word means here 'profitable.'

to draw near unto God: i. e. to worship Him as the true God: or perhaps union with God in the mystic sense is meant. For such mystical union the cognate Arabic word (*qurb*) is often used.

74 Maschil of Asaph.

1 O God, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever?

Psalm LXXIV.

Theme. A plaintive appeal to God to intervene on behalf of His people. They have been humbled: temple and synagogues have been destroyed: no prophet, no signs in the land. How long will Jehovah continue to allow this!

I. *Title.* A Maskil. An Asaph Psalm. On the word 'Maskil,' see vol. i. p. 16.

II. *Contents.* (1) God's help invoked on the ground of what He did for the nation in the past (verses 1–3).

(2) Description of the devastation of the temple by the heathen (verses 4–9).

(3) God's help once more invoked on the ground of what He is to the nation and of what He has done for it (verses 10–17).

(4) Prayer to be protected from shame and cruelty (verses 18–23).

The particularism in Pss. lxxiv and lxxix is striking. What the heathen have done against the Jewish nation they have done against God. In Ps. lxxiv it is the ruin of the sacred places—temple and synagogues—and the arresting of the outward religious life of the nation that form the chief burden of the complaint. In lxxix the suffering of the people is most prominent. But in both, all the heathen, i. e. all non-Israelites, are assumed to be the foes of God, and His vengeance is invoked on them.

III. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm to enable us to decide with confidence when or under what circumstances it was written. The general situation implied is clear enough. Heathen foes have invaded the land, laid Jerusalem in ruins, burnt the temple and all the synagogues of the country. The religious life of the nation is at a standstill. There are no prophets (verse 9), which shows that the destruction of the temple in B. C. 586 cannot have been the occasion of the Psalm: there were synagogues in the land (verse 8), which proves the Psalm post-exilic. Of many proposed dates the likeliest to suit Pss. lxxiv and lxxix is one during the Syrian persecutions in the second century B. C., though nothing positive can be said on the matter, since the nation passed through similar experiences many times: and, moreover, it is to be remembered that the Psalms were composed not merely, perhaps not chiefly, to express the feelings of any one time, but to voice the emotions of all times as prompted by reflection and actual experience. A poet's thoughts are often prompted and guided by events belonging to other times than his own.

Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy
pasture?
Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased 2
of old,
Which thou hast redeemed to be the tribe of thine inheritance;
And mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

1–3. *God's help invoked.*

1. smoke: figuratively of the working of God's anger: so xviii. 18, lxxx. 4; Lam. ii. 3 f.

the sheep of thy pasture: i. e. the sheep shepherded or pastured by God: see lxxviii. 52, lxxix. 13, lxxx. 1, xcv. 7.

2. congregation. The Hebrew word (*'edah*) occurs in the O. T. 130 times, and is invariably translated in the LXX by the Greek form of synagogue, though 'synagogue' in the usual sense cannot be the meaning here. As opposed to the Hebrew term *gahal* it stands for a more general assembly of Israelites. In the P. Code it occurs frequently in the sense of gatherings of the people for worship, so agreeing with the Latin and English rendering 'Congregation.' It does not denote here, however, any single congregation, but the nation that is in the habit of congregating: i. e. the nation regarded as a church. This church conception of the nation was a growth of later times, and it was specially fostered by such persecutions as were carried on by the Syrians in the second century B. C. Persecution drives the persecuted together, and strengthens in them the feeling of unity.

which thou hast purchased: the reference is to the deliverance from Egypt. God by that act gained a right to the possession of Israel: see Exod. xix. 4 ff. The LXX, Jero. wrongly translate the verb 'possessed.' The original passage (Exod. xv. 16) and the parallelism support the R. V.

redeemed: the Heb. (*ga'al*) means to set free by paying a ransom or by providing a substitute. The other Hebrew word generally translated redeem (*padah*) refers primarily to the setting free of slaves. The same Greek word (*lutroō*) usually translates both Hebrew verbs, as also a third Hebrew verb found in cxxxvi. 24, rendered 'redeem' in the A. V.

tribe of thine inheritance: 'the tribe' (i. e. 'people') 'whom thou possessest.' The same Hebrew word means 'rod' or 'sceptre,' and also the tribe over which the sceptre-wielding chief rules. In the ancient versions and in the A. V. the former meaning is wrongly adopted.

mount Zion: the verb 'remember' is understood. The

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual ruins,
All the evil that the enemy hath done in the sanctuary.
4 Thine adversaries have roared in the midst of thine assembly;
They have set up their ensigns for signs.
5 They seemed as men that lifted up
Axes upon a thicket of trees.
6 And now all the carved work thereof together
They break down with hatchet and hammers.
7 They have set thy sanctuary on fire;

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rendering of the versions (except Jero.) 'this mount Zion' is excluded by the Hebrew. On mount Zion see additional note pp. 368 ff.

3. feet: read 'eyes,' varying the Hebrew slightly. The LXX has 'hands.'

ruins: better, 'utter ruin.' See on lxxiii. 18: cf. 1 Macc. iv. 38.

4-9. *Description of the Devastation of the Temple.*

4. roared: the temple courts resounded with the idle boasts of the conqueror instead of with the praises of God. LXX, Vulg. for **roared** have 'boasted.'

thine assembly: rather, 'thy temple': *lit.* 'thy meeting place.' See Lam. ii. 6.

their ensigns for signs: in Hebrew the same noun is used in both cases: 'they have set up their signs for ours.' It is the symbols or rites of Israel's religion that are referred to: Sabbath, sacrifice, phylacteries, &c. These were suppressed, and instead of them idolatrous rites introduced: see verse 9 and 1 Macc. i. 45-49, v. 49, and cf. Exod. xxxi. 13.

5 f. The enemy, in tearing down the carved work on walls and doors, resemble wood-cutters who are hewing down trees. The sanctuary is to the former no more sacred than common trees to the latter. The Hebrew text in these two verses is probably corrupt. If we retain the M. T. the following rendering seems best:

5. 'Each one' (of the foes) 'appears as one lifting up axes in a thicket of trees.'

6. 'And now they strike down with hatchet and hammers all its carved work.'

carved work: palm trees and open flowers were engraved on the temple walls (1 Kings vi. 29).

7-9. *Temple and Synagogues destroyed. Religious observances stopped.*

They have profaned the dwelling place of thy name even
to the ground.
They said in their heart, Let us make havoc of them 8
altogether:
They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.
We see not our signs: 9
There is no more any prophet;
Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.
How long, O God, shall the adversary reproach? 10
Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?
Why drawest thou back thy hand, even thy right hand? 11

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7. It is not said nor implied that the temple was wholly burnt down (as in 2 Kings xxv. 9 f.).

profaned . . . to the ground: lxxxix. 39 suggests the meaning: 'profaned it by levelling it with the ground.'

the dwelling place of thy name: i. e. which is called by thy name: cf. Deut. xii. 11.

8. Render: 'They say in their hearts, let us destroy them altogether: They have burnt all the meeting houses of God in the land.'

Let us make havoc: read (with Pesh., Duhm) 'Let us destroy' (verb *yagah*). Most Jewish and many Christian expositors read 'Let us oppress,' the verb in Ezek. xlv. 8 (*yanah*). The LXX, Jero. make a noun of the word: 'They said in their heart, (viz.) *all their kindred* (said).'

the synagogues: these institutions were probably established during the Exile, and in Palestine after the return. Down to the destruction of the temple in A. D. 71 the synagogue was merely a place of instruction (*beth midrash*).

9. signs: see on verse 4.

There is no more any prophet: a characteristic of the Maccabean age: see 1 Macc. iv. 46, ix. 27, xiv. 41.

Note that the function of the prophet here is that of a foreteller—ne who can tell 'how long.' The O. T. prophet is usually ather a teacher and leader in religious things than a diviner—'forthteller.'

10–17. *Another appeal to God: how long?*

10. blaspheme: *lit.* 'contemn': 'despise.' The reproaching nd the despising is not so much in words as in deeds.

11. Render: 'Why drawest thou back thy hand, and restrainest y right hand in thy bosom?'

Pluck it out of thy bosom *and* consume *them.*

12 Yet God is my King of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength:
Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,

Pluck it **:** not in the Hebrew: nor should it be supplied in English.

out of (thy bosom): change one consonant in the Hebrew (*m* to *b*) and render, 'in' (literally 'in the midst of').

consume: read (with a trivial change) 'restrain.'

12-17. *God's acts of deliverance in the past, a proof of what He is able to do.*

12. Render: 'Nevertheless thou, Jah, art our King from of old, Performing acts of deliverance in the earth.'

Yet God: in the following verses the second person is used, and, by making changes in the Hebrew that are not great, we obtain a text which yields: 'But' or 'Nevertheless thou Jah,' &c.

my King: better follow LXX, Vulg. and read 'our King.' It is the plural that is used in the context: cf. verse 9.

salvation: the word is plural in Hebrew, and denotes 'acts of deliverance': 'deliverances.'

in the midst: Hebrew, and especially Aramaic, idiom for 'in.'

13 f. The allusion is to the ancient creation-myth preserved in Babylonian inscriptions. See 'Genesis' in this series p. 67 ff. There is nothing in this Psalm to indicate that the past history of Israel is in the writer's mind: cf. the historical Psalms lxxviii, cv f. We have an account of the creation in verse 15 ff., suggesting that what is described in verse 13 f. occurred before the creation.

13. Thou didst divide the sea: He cut in two the sea-monster: cf. what is said of Marduk and Tiamat. 'Sea' here, as in vii. 13, stands for sea-monster, the primaeval Chaos.

Thou brakest the heads of the dragons: the parallelism of sea and dragons shows that the sense is similar if not identical. Here the dragons are the offspring of the sea-monster.

14. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan: the sea-monster is represented as having seven heads. W. Robertson Smith thinks that the 'leviathan' of Scripture and the *tannin* of the Arabs is a personification of the waterspout (*Rel. Sem.*, 141). See cxlviii. 7.

Thou gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the
wilderness.
15 Thou didst cleave fountain and flood:
Thou driedst up mighty rivers.
16 The day is thine, the night also is thine:
Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth:
Thou hast made summer and winter.
18 Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD,
And that a foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

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the people inhabiting the wilderness: render: 'wild animals of the desert.'

There is a peculiar point in what is said here of Leviathan—God rescued the dry land from Leviathan after much fighting: and the flesh of the monster is cut up and given to wild animals that inhabited that very dry land which he battled his hardest to prevent from coming into being as such. What God did to the great enemy of the universe is pleaded as a reason why He should now come to the rescue of His people.

15. Render: '**Thou didst cleave** (cut a way for) fountains (collective) and winter torrents (wadies): Thou didst dry up perennial streams,' i. e. God lessened the area of the all-pervading primaeval ocean, causing the surplus water to bubble up in springs and to course between mountains as winter brooks.

16. The monster is killed: fountains and brooks flow. Next the creation of light is described.

thine: i. e. Thou art their creator.

the light and the sun: perhaps luminaries together with the sun: the lesser together with the greater. But probably we must drop the conjunction 'and' before sun: translating, 'the luminary' (or 'light bearer'), (i. e.) 'the sun.'

17. borders: what separates people from people, viz. mountains, deserts, seas, &c. Hardly (as Kirkpatrick thinks), the divisions of land and sea.

18–23. *Prayer to be protected from shame and cruelty.*

18. Render: 'Notwithstanding this' (the power thou hast displayed, see verses 13 ff.) 'the enemy has reproached (thee) O Jehovah, And a foolish people have shown contempt for thy name (= thy reputed character).

Remember this: read with a slight change 'Notwithstanding this.'

foolish (people): in the moral sense: see xiv. 7.

19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the wild beast:
Forget not the life of thy poor for ever.
20 Have respect unto the covenant:
For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of violence.
21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed:
Let the poor and needy praise thy name.
22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause:
Remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee all the day.
23 Forget not the voice of thine adversaries:
The tumult of those that rise up against thee ascendeth continually.

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19. Render: 'Do not give over to wild beasts the soul of thy turtle-dove. Do not forget for ever thy afflicted ones.'

turtle-dove: an emblem of innocent helplessness.

the life: omit with LXX, Jero., Duhm. In Hebrew the same word means 'wild beast' and 'life.' This word is repeated by mistake from the rest of the verse. The result of the omission is shown in the rendering given above.

20. covenant: see Exod. xxiv. 8.

the dark places of the earth: rather, 'of the land': the secret hiding-places of the persecuted Israelites (1 Macc. i. 53, ii. 27–38).

the habitations of violence: i. e. spots in which violence dwells. Better, however, read 'haughtiness and violence,' the Hebrew being very much the same.

21. return: better, 'turn away,' 'turn from'—the radical meaning of the verb: 'Let not the oppressed turn back (from thee).'

ashamed: 'disappointed.' The Hebrew words for 'being ashamed' have this sense frequently.

the poor and needy: rather, 'the wretched' (or 'the afflicted') 'and poor.'

22. foolish: in the ethical sense as in verse 18.

23. ascendeth continually: Heb. 'keeps on ascending.' The Hebrew noun for 'whole burnt offering' has the same etymology as the verb translated 'ascendeth,' and this noun is often associated with the word translated 'continually': see Exod. xxix. 42; Num. xxviii (frequently). The phrase here has surely some reference to the sacrificial sense. 'The boisterous

75 For the Chief Musician; *set to* Al-tashheth.
A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

1 We give thanks unto thee, O God;
We give thanks, for thy name is near:
Men tell of thy wondrous works.

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noise of thy foes is their daily offering—they present thee with no other.' Changing one Hebrew vowel we have the same expression exactly as in Num. xxviii. 3 ('a continual burnt offering.')

PSALM LXXV.

Theme. Acknowledgement of God's power and goodness in delivering His people.

I. *Title.* **For the Chief Musician:** see vol. i. p. 14. **Al-tashheth:** *lit.* 'do not destroy': the title of a harvest song (see Isa. lxv. 8), probably the two first words of this song: the present Psalm was to be sung to the melody of this song. See vol. i. p. 16.

Psalm: a lyric from the point of view of the music.

Song: a lyric from the point of view of the matter.

II. *Contents.* (1) The people express their gratitude to God for some deliverance (verse 1).

(2) God reminds the wicked that it will be ill with them and well with the righteous (verses 2–4).

(3) The Psalmist warns the same people, reminding them that there is no help except in God who humbles the proud and exalts the humble (verses 5–8).

(4) A promise to praise God who undertakes to abase the haughty (verses 9 f.).

The prayer for deliverance in Ps. lxxiv is suitably followed by two songs which celebrate deliverance granted.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm celebrates some national deliverance, but which one we have no means of ascertaining. Many (Ewald, &c.) refer this Psalm and the next to the deliverance from Assyria (2 Kings xix): others say that it was some signal victory over Syria that called forth both Psalms.

1. The expression of thanks and praise.

Render: 'We give thanks unto thee, O God, We give thanks: and we call upon thy name: We recount thy wonderful acts.'

for thy name is near: read (with LXX, Pesh.): 'We call upon Thy name': the difference in the Hebrew is not great.

Men tell: read (with Pesh., Vulg.): 'we recount': LXX has 'I will recount.' The LXX and Vulg. very rarely differ in the Psalms.

This verse seems to imply that some extraordinary deliverance had been vouchsafed.

2 When I shall find the set time,
I will judge uprightly.
3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved:
I have set up the pillars of it. [Selah
4 I said unto the arrogant, Deal not arrogantly:
And to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:
5 Lift not up your horn on high;
Speak not with a stiff neck.

2–4. *God, who is the speaker in these verses, warns the wicked of their latter end.*

2. When I shall find: better, 'whenever I take or choose.'

I will judge: better, 'I judge,' the verb including in it ruling as well as administering justice.

3. Render: 'Though the earth and its people be dissolved, I—I will assuredly set up aright its pillars.' Righteousness and the like are the pillars or supports for God's rule in the world. These will never give way, however unjust and defiant men may be.

I have set: render: 'I—I will certainly set,' &c. ('perf. of certainty').

4. Render:—

'I say to the fools, do not play the fool:
And to the wicked, toss not up (your) horn.'

arrogant: render: 'fools': see on lxxiii. 3.

Lift not up the horn: the same sense as our 'he holds his head high': the sense is, 'be not proud,' 'haughty.' The figure is taken from the habit of horned animals of tossing their horns in the air when under feeling analogous to human pride. The tossing of the horns is a sign of strength, and, when the words are applied to men, of victory as well as of pride, arrogance, &c. (see verse 10). The same figure is employed in verses 5, 10, and in lxxxix. 17, 24, xcii. 10, cxii. 9, clxviii. 14; 1 Sam. ii. 10. In Deut. xxxiii. 17 the phrase is used in the sense of attacking, goring.

5–8. *Words of warning by the Psalmist.*

5. Render: 'Lift not your horn against the Lofty one, Nor speak arrogantly against the Rock.'

on high: render: 'against the lofty one': *lit.* 'to the height,' the noun 'height' standing probably for God, as does 'heaven' in Rabbinical Hebrew. The parallel word in the next clause stands for God: see below, see xcii. 8.

Speak not with a stiff neck: better, if the M. T. is retained, 'Do not speak arrogantly with a (stiff) neck.' The adjective goes with the verb as in xxxi. 19, and means 'arrogantly.' The

For neither from the east, nor from the west, 6
Nor yet from the south, *cometh* lifting up.
But God is the judge: 7
He putteth down one, and lifteth up another.
For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the 8
wine foameth;
It is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same:
Surely the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall
wring them out, and drink them.
But I will declare for ever, 9
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

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substantive neck means by itself a 'stiff neck' as in Job xv. 26 (R. V. 'stiff neck,' Heb. 'neck').

But the sense would be greatly improved if by making a trivial change in the Hebrew we read 'against the rock' for 'with a (stiff) neck.' This is implied in the LXX, which renders verse 5^b: 'Speak not unrighteousness against God.' In this Greek version the Hebrew word for rock is translated 'God' whenever it stands for the Divine Being, e.g. xviii. 2, 46, xxviii. 1. There are but one or two exceptions: see on lxxviii. 35. Perhaps it was to avoid a name of God which might suggest image worship.

6 f. give the ground for the warning uttered in verse 5.

6. Render 6 f: 'For not from the east nor from the west Nor from the mountainous waste (comes redress), But God judges (redresses): He sets one down and raises another.'

lifting up: the Hebrew allows of this rendering, and also of the rendering 'of the mountains': the latter is what is intended here. 'The wilderness' (strictly, 'wild pasture land') 'of the mountains' = the mountainous waste of Judaea, i. e. the south. The Targ. add the north, assuming 'the wilderness' to be that of Syria.

8. Render: 'For a cup there is in the hand of Jehovah with foaming (or ruddy) wine full of mixed spices: And He pours out from it (the cup): Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain out.'

full of mixture: charged with spices that increase its intoxicating power.

9 f. *The Psalmist's promise to praise God.*

9. declare: better, 'exult': so LXX and parallelism. The Hebrew is much the same.

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off;
But the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.

76 For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

1 In Judah is God known:
His name is great in Israel.
2 In Salem also is his tabernacle,
And his dwelling place in Zion.
3 There he brake the arrows of the bow;

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10. will I cut off. If we retain the M. T. the 'I' of this verse can only be the 'I' of the foregoing. 'I will glory in Jehovah, and with His strength I will cut short the pride of the wicked.' If, however, we change but one letter in the verb we get a more sensible rendering: 'He' ('Jehovah, in whom I exult,' &c.) 'will cut off,' &c.

Psalm LXXVI.

Theme. Jehovah has subdued His enemies and returns in triumph.

I. *Contents.* The course of thought in this Psalm is clear in the four strophes of which it is made up.

(1) God is known in Zion where He dwells (verses 1–3).

(2) God's glory is manifested in the discomfiture of Israel's foes (verses 4–6).

(3) Who can stand before God? (verses 7–9).

(4) It is the duty of Israel to praise Him (verses 10–12).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. lxxv.

1. known: Heb. (prob.) 'God is one who has made Himself known in Judah': i. e. in the victories won by the Jews over their adversaries: see xlviii. 3.

Israel is parallel with **Judah,** and means the same.

2. Salem: shortened form of Jerusalem, taken here from Gen. xiv. 18 (P): see also Heb. vii. 1 f. Since Gen. xiv. 18 is late, the present Psalm depending on it must be later.

tabernacle . . . dwelling stand here for the temple. The sanctuary in Jewish and other ancient religions was believed to afford protection against foes. The cities of refuge were originally sacred places. See Ps. xxvii. 3 f.

3. Render: 'He has broken the fiery shafts of the bow, the shield, and the sword: And He has made war (to cease).'

There. The Hebrew word is almost certainly a verb belonging to the preceding verse and meaning 'He set it' ('His

The shield, and the sword, and the battle. [Selah
Glorious art thou *and* excellent, from the mountains 4
of prey.
The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep; 5
And none of the men of might have found their hands.
At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, 6
Both chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

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dwelling'). No change in the consonantal text is required (*sh* and *s* are written alike in unpointed Hebrew).

arrows (of the bow). The Hebrew means 'flashes of lightning': from their swiftness arrows are thus termed. 'Fiery shafts' would keep up the figure without concealing the sense.

battle: better, 'war.' We must, according to the rhetorical figure called *anakolouthon*, supply with this noun the appropriate verb—here, 'to make cease.'

4-6. *God's glory manifested in the discomfiture of His enemies.*

4. Render: 'Terrible art thou and Majestic on the glorious eternal mountain.'

Glorious: read 'terrible,' rearranging the same letters: so Targ., Theod.

excellent: better, 'majestic.'

from the mountains of prey: for 'from' render 'on,' a common meaning of this preposition. 'Mountains' is the plural of majesty: render, 'glorious mountain.' Zion is obviously intended. For 'prey' read 'eternity,' rendering in the manner of Semitic as an adjective. One Hebrew word (*'ad*) means both 'eternity' and 'prey.' The present Hebrew word means 'prey' only, and is probably originally a scribal gloss substituted for the word glossed. So Hitzig. If the M. T. is kept unchanged Zion will be called the 'mountain of prey' because Israel's foes fell on it.

5. The stouthearted: cf. Isa. x. 12 ff.

sleep: the sleep of death is meant as in xiii. 4; Jer. li. 39, 57; Nahum iii. 18.

men of might: rather, 'courageous or brave men,' referring o the defeated warriors in the recent war, see cxviii. 15.

have found their hands: i. e. found strength to hold out in he battle. The word 'hands,' as the instruments of achievement, s often used for power, resource: see Joshua viii. 20; 2 Sam. iv. 1; f. Deut. xxxvi. 36.

6. chariot and horse: used by metonymy for their riders: charioteers and horsemen' are meant.

cast into a deep sleep: the verb so rendered is often used of supernaturally induced sleep: see Judges iv. 21; Dan. x. 9.

7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared:
And who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?
8 Thou didst cause sentence to be heard from heaven;
The earth feared, and was still,
9 When God arose to judgement,
To save all the meek of the earth. [Selah
10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee:
The residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee.
11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God:
Let all that be round about him bring presents unto him
that ought to be feared.

7–9. *Who can stand when God judges?*

7. Render: 'And thou—terrible art thou: who then can stand in front of thee, on account of the intensity of thy wrath?'

when once thou art angry: render as above, changing one vowel only in the Hebrew ('intensity' for 'anger').

8. Thou didst cause sentence: when God gave His people victory He pronounced sentence of condemnation upon the enemy: cf. xlvi. 6.

from heaven: Jehovah dwells in Zion (verses 2, 4), but His permanent and principal abiding place is heaven. We have a similar mixture of figures in lxviii. 17 f.–33 (in verse 17^{b} read: 'Jehovah is come from Sinai into the sanctuary'): see on cxxiii. 1.

10–12. *The duty of grateful homage to the all-delivering God.*

10. Render: 'Surely the wrath of man will praise thee: with the residue of great wrath thou wilt deck (gird) thyself,' i. e. the wrathful enemies of Zion will praise God when they see His power displayed, and Jehovah will get Himself glory by conquering those that remain rebellious.' But this is at once astray from the connexion and in itself improbable. Better read, making unimportant changes: 'All the tribes of mankind shall praise Thee: the residue of the tribes shall keep festival to thee.' So Ewald, &c.

residue: a technical term for the people who remain after God's final judgement has been executed.

11. Vow, and pay: render according to Hebrew idiom: 'If ye vowed (in the event of victory), then pay (your vows).'

the LORD your God: i. e. Jehovah your God. It is strange that the name Jehovah should be found in an Elohistic collection of Psalms.

round about him: i. e. in the neighbourhood of Zion.

He shall cut off the spirit of princes: 12
He is terrible to the kings of the earth.

For the Chief Musician; after the manner of Jeduthun. 77
A Psalm of Asaph.

I will cry unto God with my voice; 1

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12. Render:—

'He will cut short the life of rulers.
He is terrible to the kings of the earth.'

spirit: it is the living principle that is meant. The Hebrew word rendered 'soul' (*nephesh*) means the life actually lived with its outward manifestations. With the Hebrew words for 'spirit' and 'soul' may be compared the Greek words *zoe* and *bios*. The two Hebrew words referred to are never spoken of as distinct parts of man, but only as two sides of the same inner life. The O. T. does not teach the doctrine of three natures in man (body, soul, and spirit), even if the N. T. does, which is doubtful: see Schmiedel and von Soden on the N. T. passages (1 Thess. v. 23; Heb. iv. 12).

PSALM LXXVII.

Theme. A wail of sorrow. God's wonderful dealings with His people in the past, a source of confidence for the present and future.

I. *Title.* **after the manner of Jeduthun:** i. e. to be sung to a melody called Jeduthun or (less likely) a melody composed by Jeduthun. The name Jeduthun occurs in the O. T. also in the form Jedethun. Both these names stand for the person called elsewhere Ethan[1]. See on *Asaph Psalms*, p. 37 f.

II. *Contents.*

(1) The Psalmist's intense anguish: no relief is felt from prayer or from a contemplation of the Divine goodness in the past (verses –10).

(2) In contradiction to his present sad lot, forgotten of God as e seems to be, he recalls the miracles of mercy wrought by God n behalf of His people in the past (verses 11–20).

Probably the close of the Psalm, expressing the writer's faith in od and the future, has fallen out.

III. *Authorship and Date.* It is impossible to decide with cer-inty when or under what circumstances the composition of this salm took place, though that it implies a time of great distress is eyond question: but times of that kind occurred often in the ation's history.

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[1] See 1 Chron. xv. 17.

Even unto God with my voice, and he will give ear
unto me.
2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord:
My hand was stretched out in the night, and slacked not;
My soul refused to be comforted.
3 I remember God, and am disquieted:
I complain, and my spirit is overwhelmed. [Selah
4 Thou holdest mine eyes watching:
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

1-10. *The Psalmist's intense anguish.*

1. Render:—

'My voice is towards God:
And I will cry loudly unto God,
So that He may give ear unto me.'

with my voice: i. e. 'loudly,' according to Hebrew idiom.

2. My hand was stretched out: i. e. in prayer. The Hebrew verb, however, means 'to pour forth': passive, 'to be poured forth.'

For 'My hand,' read with Targ., 'My eye,' and render: 'My eye was poured out' (in tears), &c.: agreeing closely with Lam. iii. 49.

3. Render: 'When I would remember God, I was disquieted: When I would muse in prayer, my spirit fainted.'

my spirit: i. e. 'I myself,' as 'my soul' in the foregoing verse.

is overwhelmed: *lit.* 'is covered over,' as if crushed by a superincumbent load; see cvii. 5, cxlii. 4, cxliii. 4: cf. lxi. 3.

4. Render: 'When thou layest hold of my eyelids
I become restless, not being able to speak.'

holdest: i. e. to hold (open) the eyelids is to prevent them from closing in sleep.

mine eyes watching: Heb. 'the guards of my eyes,' i. e. 'my eyelids.'

troubled: the verb occurs also in Gen. xli. 8; Dan. ii. 3, and means 'to be struck,' 'tossed,' or 'beaten about.'

5. Render: 'I meditated much (or, I pictured) the days of old, the years of long ago.'

His eyes were kept open: no sleep came to them: thought was stirred up and he recalled times when things went better with him. The same feeling has been often expressed. Cf.:—

'No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand.'

Dante, *Inferno*, v. 1. 18 f.

I have considered the days of old, 5
The years of ancient times.
I call to remembrance my song in the night: 6
I commune with mine own heart;
And my spirit made diligent search.
Will the Lord cast off for ever? 7
And will he be favourable no more?
Is his mercy clean gone for ever? 8
Doth his promise fail for evermore?

'For of Fortune's sharp adversite
The worst kind of infortune is this,
A man to have been in prosperite,
And it remember when it passid is.'
Chaucer, *Troilus and Cressida*, Book III.

'A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.'
Tennyson, *Locksley Hall.*

the days of old and the **years of ancient times** in the parallel clauses stand for the same thing.

The word translated **I have considered** may mean 'I pictured,' 'made an image of before my mind.'

6. my song in the night: now in my sorrow I call to mind the song of praise I used to sing for the joy experienced in the day. See Job xxxv. 10.

'song': *lit.* 'a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument,' then a song of any kind: cf. the generalized meaning of lyric, and of the Heb. word (*mizmor*) for 'Psalm[1].'

I commune, &c. This verb has the same strongly subjective form as the preceding one. 'I cannot restrain myself from murmuring to myself the night songs of better times.' The verb means not merely to think or meditate about, but also 'to utter in a low tone.' Nothing makes past pleasure more real in thought than the experience of sorrow.

my spirit (= 'I myself') **made diligent search:** i.e. my thoughts wander in all directions. Better, however, with Wellhausen, make a slight change, and read 'my spirit' (= I myself) 'suffered anguish.'

7–9. *Will God never more be well-disposed, kind and gracious, as He used to be?*

7. cast off: the word in xliv. 10, lxxiv. 1.

8. promise: read 'faithfulness' with Nestle. The Hebrew word used here never means 'promise.'

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[1] But see p. 4.

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious?
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? [Selah
10 And I said, This is my infirmity;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the
Most High.
11 I will make mention of the deeds of the LORD;
For I will remember thy wonders of old.
12 I will meditate also upon all thy work,
And muse on thy doings.
13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary:
Who is a great god like unto God?
14 Thou art the God that doest wonders:
Thou hast made known thy strength among the peoples.
15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. [Selah

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10. Render: 'Then I said: this is my wound' (or 'sickness' or 'trouble')—'that the right hand of the Most High has changed.' What causes the Psalmist to feel wounded at heart, sorrow-smitten, is the thought that the ancient power of Jehovah has left him. The following verses referring to God's gracious doings in the past support this interpretation. So the Targ. and the Greek and Latin versions.

the years of the right hand: the Hebrew can yield this meaning or that given above, which is far preferable.

11-15 and 20 contain a survey of God's gracious dealings with Israel in the past. There is no need to regard this section as a fragment of another poem, though 16-19 is clearly that.

13. Render: 'Thy way, O God, is holy (i. e. faithful): Who is a God great like our God?'

Thy way: i. e. thy mode of acting towards thy people.

is in the sanctuary: better, 'is holy'; so Targ., Pesh.: the 'in' ('*beth essentiae*') is not to be translated, and the noun is to be construed as an adjective—both according to Hebrew idiom.

like unto God: for 'God' read 'our God' with the LXX, Pesh.

14. the God: read 'a God': the definite article is due to dittography.

15. redeemed: on the Hebrew verb (*ga'al*) see on lxxiv. 2.

The sons of Jacob and Joseph: i. e. the sons of Jacob, not omitting those of Ephraim and Manasseh the sons of Joseph.

The waters saw thee, O God; 16
The waters saw thee, they were afraid:
The depths also trembled.
The clouds poured out water; 17
The skies sent out a sound:
Thine arrows also went abroad.
The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind; 18
The lightnings lightened the world:
The earth trembled and shook.
Thy way was in the sea, 19

The addition is intended to make it clear that the Northern Kingdom is embraced as well as the Southern—the whole nation.

16-19. *God's sovereignty displayed in the storm.* In this section we are suddenly transported from the realm of history to that of nature, verse 20 continuing the historical survey dropped at verse 15. It is quite evident that verses 16-19 are an interpolation. Their metrical structure is also different from that of the rest of the Psalm. The language is borrowed from the creation-myth: see on lxxiv. 13 ff. There is no reference to the passage of the Red Sea.

16. they were afraid: Heb. 'they were in pangs,' 'writhing in pain,' as a mother in childbirth.

The depths: a reference to the primaeval abyss of Babylonian mythology. When the hostile Tiamat beheld God it fell into convulsions of pain, for it knew itself in the presence of one who had supreme power.

17-20. Cf. Hab. iii.

17. Besides the tempestuous waters below, the waters above were also in commotion, and poured forth showers of rain accompanied by thunder and lightning. See cxiv. 3; Exod. xv. 5, 8; and especially Hab. iii. 10.

Thine arrows: i e. flashes of lightning: see verse 18; cf. Hab. iii. 11.

18. The voice, &c.: better, 'Hark! thy thunder,' &c.

whirlwind: *lit.* 'what goes round.' See on lxxxiii. 14. Many ther renderings have been proposed.

19. Render: 'Thy way was upon the sea, And thy paths were pon great waters, And thy footprints could not be traced.'

the sea: i. e. the sea-monster, the Tiamat. See on lxxiv. 3 ff.: 'Thou didst tread on the abysmal waters in token of Thy overeignty.'

And thy paths in the great waters,
And thy footsteps were not known.
20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock,
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

78 Maschil of Asaph.

1 Give ear, O my people, to my law:

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thy paths: the Jewish editors (Massorites) follow the Targ. and correct the text, reading the singular 'path': so Jero. The plural is better and is better attested.

were not known: rather, 'were unknowable,' though the Hebrew admits of both renderings. In His triumphant march God moves so quickly that the way He goes cannot be traced.

20. This verse continues the historical retrospect, interrupted by verses 16–19.

Thou leddest, &c.: cf. Exod. xv. 13.

By the hand of Moses and Aaron: taken apparently from Num. xxxiii. 1; cf. Mic. vi. 4. God acted as guide, but the guidance was through Moses and Aaron.

With the exception of this passage, neither Moses nor Aaron is mentioned in the Psalter outside Books IV and V.

PSALM LXXVIII.

Theme: Lessons of warning drawn from God's treatment of the nation in the past.

I. *Contents.* This is the longest and one of the finest of the historical Psalms. The arrangement is according to Chronology, so that a logical analysis is almost impossible.

The general course of thought may be thus set out:—

(1) Exhortation to give heed to what the fathers have taught about God's doings to His people (verses 1–8).

(2) The marvels wrought by God at the Exodus from Egypt and during the journeying in the wilderness. The unbelief of the people (verses 9–31).

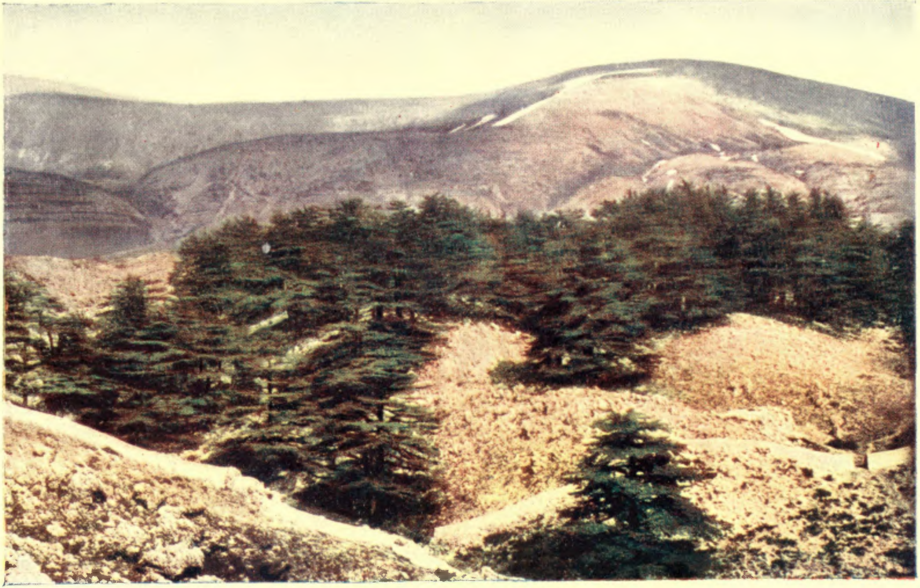
(3) God's punishment of the people for their sin. His pity. Their repeated unbelief and apostasy (verses 32–58).

(4) Israel's idolatry in Canaan, and its penalty (verses 59–66).

(5) God's choice of Judah instead of Ephraim (verses 67–72).

The purpose of the writer seems to be to warn the nation against apostasy.

The reference to the Northern Kingdom adds emphasis to the warning. God had cast off Ephraim on account of their disloyalty



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THE CEDARS OF LEBANON

Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth in a parable; 2
I will utter dark sayings of old:

---

to the Divine King. Judah must expect the same punishment if the same sin is persisted in.

II. *Authorship and Date.* There is no decisive evidence for forming a judgement as to the time when the Psalm was written. The following are the principal considerations bearing on the question :—

(1) The revolt of the ten tribes had taken place; it belonged to the far-off events of the national history, and could be referred to for didactic purposes, verses 67 ff.

(2) The didactic treatment of history, though traceable in the older prophets (Amos, &c.), was not developed to the extent seen in this Psalm until the promulgation of the Deuteronomic code (about B. C. 620). This Psalm links itself on to the historical Psalms cv–cvii, and perhaps they are all products of the same time and circumstances.

(3) The Divine name, 'The Holy One of Israel,' is derived from the Trisagion (Isa. vi. 3), and in both parts of Isaiah it occurs frequently. This would seem to show that the Psalm is not older than Isaiah's age : see on verse 4.

(4) In his account of the plagues in Egypt the writer shows no acquaintance with any Pentateuchal source except J (the Jahwist) or perhaps JE (the Jehovist). Of the Priestly code he seems to know nothing. The Psalm was therefore written either before he Exile or soon after the Exile began. More than this cannot e said, but with this all the other considerations agree.

1–8. *Introduction to the Psalm.*

1–4. *The Psalmist invokes the attention of his readers to what he s about to say.*

1. See xlix. 2; Deut. xxxii. 1; Isa. i. 2.

my law: rather, 'my teaching'; parallel to 'the words of y mouth.' The Hebrew word (*torah*) means 'teaching,' and it tands in the O. T. for God's will as revealed through His servants, rophets, priests, &c. In Rabbinical Hebrew it is the technical rm for the Pentateuch. Our rendering 'law' is due to the word *omos* in the LXX, the Greek word being suggested probably by abbinical usage. See Introduction to Ps. cxix.

2. I will open: the Hebrew expresses a strong wish or re- lve : so also does the next verb.

in a parable: read with the versions, 'in parables'; i. e. 'short structive sayings': cf. the parallel, 'dark sayings.'

I will utter: *lit.* 'I will pour forth.'

3 Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide them from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And his strength, and his wondrous works that he hath
done.
5 For he established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which he commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children:

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dark sayings: the word means strictly 'an enigma,' 'a riddle'; see Judges xiv. 12 f.; 1 Kings x. 1.

In xlix. 4 the same two nouns—'parable,' 'dark sayings'—are brought together, both of them in this instance in the singular.

3. Verse 2 should have only a comma and not a colon at the end of it, since verse 3 contains relative clauses describing the 'parables' and 'dark sayings.'

Render verse 3: 'which (i. e. the 'parables' and 'dark sayings') we have heard and known' (i. e. understood, though obscure), &c.

4. Render: 'They were not hidden from their children who, to another generation, recounted the praiseworthy acts of Jehovah and His might and His wonderful deeds which He performed.'

We will not hide: read with LXX, Jero.: 'They were not hidden'; no change in the Hebrew consonants is required. Otherwise we must read '*our* children' for '*their* children,' and supply the object of the verb from verse 3, 'which we have heard,' &c.

to the generation to come: each generation recounting to the succeeding one.

the praises: i. e. the praiseworthy acts: cf. xxii. 3, 30 f.

wondrous works: the Hebrew term (one word) is used for outstanding acts of God whether in nature or in the delivering of His people.

5–8 *give the ground of the exhortation in* 1–4.

5. testimony: what God testified; what He solemnly declared as His desire.

law: see on verse 1.

'Testimony' and 'law' stand for one thing, i. e. the command in Deut. iv. 9, the substance of which is given in the remainder of the verse. See Introduction to Ps. cxix.

Which: render 'Whereby.'

That the generation to come might know *them*, even the 6
children which should be born;
Who should arise and tell *them* to their children:
That they might set their hope in God, 7
And not forget the works of God,
But keep his commandments:
And might not be as their fathers, 8
A stubborn and rebellious generation;
A generation that set not their heart aright,
And whose spirit was not stedfast with God.
The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, 9
Turned back in the day of battle.
They kept not the covenant of God, 10
And refused to walk in his law;

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6. Render: 'In order that another generation might get to know, And that they [children yet to be born] might arise and recount them to their children.' The words in brackets are probably a margin gloss on 'another generation,' which, in the original, they immediately follow.

7. their hope: rather, 'their trust' 'or confidence,' as in Prov. iii. 16.

8. stubborn and rebellious: the same combination of adjectives in Deut. xxi. 18: cf. Deut. xxxii. 5.

stedfast: Heb. 'faithful.'

heart and **spirit** are simply strong forms of the personal pronouns.

9–16. *The marvels wrought by God at the Exodus and in the wilderness.*

9. This verse is rejected by most recent commentators. Its Hebrew is bad, its sense unsuitable, and it interrupts the connexion of verses 8 and 10.

If the verse be retained one Hebrew word (= **carrying**) must be omitted as merely a gloss on the other (= **armed**); render hen: 'The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned about and fled) in the day of battle.' The Hebrew words for 'armed with the bow' occur in 1 Chron. xii. 2; 2 Chron. xvii. 17, and, xcept also in this verse, nowhere else.

children of Ephraim: i. e. Ephraimites.

10. What is said here and in the following verses is as true of

11 And they forgat his doings,
And his wondrous works that he had shewed them.
12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers,
In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
13 He clave the sea, and caused them to pass through;
And he made the waters to stand as an heap.
14 In the day-time also he led them with a cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
15 He clave rocks in the wilderness,
And gave them drink abundantly as out of the depths.
16 He brought streams also out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.

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the Judahites as of the Ephraimites—strong ground surely for uniting the verse immediately with verse 8.

12. Here there is a brief reference to the plagues, but the poet speaks of them with greater fullness in verses 43 ff. In the next verse he passes on to the Exodus.

field (of Zoan): translate 'district': the word rendered **field** means also 'territory,' 'district.'

'Zoan' is the Greek Tanis on the east bank of the Tanaitic branch of the Nile. It is regarded as the capital of Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

13. He clave the sea: see Exod. xiv. 16; Isa. lxiii. 12, where the same word occurs.

as an heap: see xxxiii. 7 and Exod. xv. 8.

14. See Exod. xiii. 21.

15. He clave: Probably we are to carry forward the force of the conjunction 'and' (*waw consec.*) from verse 14, translating simply 'And He clave.' Otherwise the sense of the Hebrew verb (imperf.) implies a repetition of the occurrence: 'He used to cleave,' &c. There are two recorded instances of the people murmuring and of water being given them—in the one case from a rock (Exod. xvii. 1-7, JE or J), in the other from a 'Crag' (Num. xx. 2-13: P [partly JE]).

Both events occurred at the same place, for Rephidim and Kadesh are not locally different: see Num. xx. 1, 15. Have we two traditions of the same event?

abundantly: read for the peculiar Hebrew word here 'desert,' prefixing one letter: translate then: 'And gave them drink out of the depths of the desert.' So Graetz.

16. rock: rather, 'crag.'

Yet went they on still to sin against him, 17
To rebel against the Most High in the desert.
And they tempted God in their heart 18
By asking meat for their lust.
Yea, they spake against God; 19
They said, Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?
Behold, he smote the rock, that waters gushed out, 20
And streams overflowed;
Can he give bread also?
Will he provide flesh for his people?

17-31. *Israel's unbelief in the wilderness and its punishment.* The account is given in a rhetorical form, and does not accord exactly with any one O. T. narrative. It is based for the most part on Num. xi, but Exod. xvi seems largely drawn upon, and in the close of verse 26 ('guided on' &c.) there appears to be dependence on Exod. x. 13 (JE). For details see the Exegesis. It is an interesting and significant fact that though Exod. xvi belongs almost entirely to P, the parts made use of in this Psalm are such as do not belong to P.

17. Yet went they on, &c. A common formula in Judges. Hupfeld calls attention to the recurrence of 'rebel' and 'tempt' at the beginning of new sections of the Psalm (verses 17 f., 40 f., 56).

18. meat: rather, 'food.' In Old English 'meat' included all kinds of food except bread and drink.

for their lust: rather, 'for themselves.' The same Hebrew word = (1) desire, (2) soul, (3) self as an emphatic pronoun. In lxxxviii. 14 'my soul' and 'me' are in parallelism.

19. Can God, &c. Though this question is not recorded elsewhere it embodies an attitude of mind which was amply displayed.

prepare a table: cf. xxiii. 5.

20. rock: the word used in Exod. xvii. 6, but no doubt the parallel incident recorded in Num. xx. 8 ff. is also in the writer's mind.

bread: the word occurs in Exod. xvi. 8 for the food eaten in Egypt, and in Exod. xvi. 12 for the manna of the wilderness. The latter, however, belongs to the P document: perhaps here P is dependent on an older source. If not, this verse at least is post-exilic, or at earliest exilic.

flesh: quails are so described in Exod. xvi. 12 and in Num. xi. 5, 13.

This verse seems to take for granted that the water out of the rock was given before the manna and the quails: but in both Exod. and Num. the contrary is the order followed. Thus manna

21 Therefore the Lord heard, and was wroth:
And a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger also went up against Israel;
22 Because they believed not in God,
And trusted not in his salvation.
23 Yet he commanded the skies above,
And opened the doors of heaven;
24 And he rained down manna upon them to eat,
And gave them of the corn of heaven.
25 Man did eat the bread of the mighty:

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and quails Exod. xvi and Num. xi, water Exod. xvii. 1-6 and Num. xx. 8 ff.

21. Therefore the LORD heard, &c.: render: 'Therefore when Jehovah heard he was enraged.'

a fire, &c., referring to Num. xi. 1 ff.

went up: here of anger, as also in xviii. 8, where anger is spoken of under the figure of smoke. Cf. lxxiv. 1.

22. in his salvation: in His power and willingness to deliver them from thirst and hunger.

23-25. *Notwithstanding their unbelief God gave them manna.*

23. opened the doors, &c. See Introduction to civ, 'Cosmology,' &c.

24. Cf. Exod. xvi. 4: 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.'

manna: the etymology of the word given in Exod. xvi. 15 ('what is it') is a popular one, but it is not correct, as a knowledge of Hebrew shows. 'Manna' among the Beduin Arabs of the Sinaitic Peninsula denotes those thick drops of sweet substance which for six weeks in May and June exudes from the branches of trees of the Tarfu or Tamarisk kind. These drops fall thickly on the ground on warm evenings and become hard in the coolness of the night, melting under the influence of the morning sun. When gathered they resemble small white marbles, and they are considered a great luxury, though they are not eaten as food. Here, as in Exod. xvi and John vi. 31, the manna is regarded as a special gift from God; and something in the circumstances may have made the supply miraculous.

corn of heaven: according to several ancient and modern commentators the manna is so called on account of its granular shape: see Exod. xvi. 31.

25. Man: rather, 'every one.' The Hebrew word here (*īsh*) has often this sense: cf. Exod. xvi. 18, 21.

He sent them meat to the full.
He caused the east wind to blow in the heaven: 26
And by his power he guided the south wind.
He rained flesh also upon them as the dust, 27
And winged fowl as the sand of the seas:
And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, 28
Round about their habitations.
So they did eat, and were well filled; 29
And he gave them that they lusted after.
They were not estranged from their lust, 30
Their meat was yet in their mouths,
When the anger of God went up against them, 31

---

bread of the mighty: render with LXX and Pesh.: 'bread of angels'; cf. Targ., 'bread from the dwelling of angels.' For **mighty** as an epithetic of angels see ciii. 3 and Wisdom xvi. 20. According to Jewish mythology angels feed on manna.

meat: rather, 'provision': food consisting of either cooked fish or cooked flesh: *lit.* 'what has been caught by hunting or fishing.' Here probably we are to understand the quails in contrast with the bread (= 'manna') of the previous clause.

26-28 *describe the coming of the quails.* In this account the quails are sent immediately after the manna, as in Exod. xvi. In Numbers quails are given because the people are tired of the manna. In the former the manna is most important, in the latter it is of less importance than the quails. It is the language of Num. xi that is most drawn upon here.

26. The verbs in verse 26 are identical with those found in verse 52: **east wind** and **south wind** really mean the south-east wind, that which blows from Arabia. The terms 'east' and 'south' are named separately owing to the exigency of the poetry. It is the Sirocco that is meant.

27. flesh and **winged fowl:** i. e. quails: see Exod. xvi. 13 and Num. xi. 31.

28. habitations: the noun here found is that used for the (P) Tabernacle of the wilderness.

30. estranged: cf. Num. xi. 20, where the cognate noun ('loathsome thing') occurs.

their lust: i. e. what they lusted after.

meat: see on verse 18.

31. See Num. xi. 33.

And slew of the fattest of them,
And smote down the young men of Israel.
32 For all this they sinned still,
And believed not in his wondrous works.
33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,
And their years in terror.
34 When he slew them, then they inquired after him:
And they returned and sought God early.
35 And they remembered that God was their rock,
And the Most High God their redeemer.
36 But they flattered him with their mouth,
And lied unto him with their tongue.
37 For their heart was not right with him,
Neither were they faithful in his covenant.

---

the fattest: i. e. the strongest.

smote down: rather, 'bowed down': 'laid low.' Even young men were bowed down as though with the weight of years.

32–58. *The people continue in their unbelief. God punishes them, yet relents, and performs great marvels, though they are still unbelieving.*

32–37. *Notwithstanding what God had done for them, the people sinned more and more.*

32. For all this: i. e. 'Notwithstanding all this.'

33. in vanity: *lit.* 'in a breath.' He made their life end in nothing.

34. returned and sought God early: render: 'They sought God once more.' The first verb qualifies the second adverbially, and the second verb means simply 'to seek,' and not to 'seek early,' nor to 'seek diligently.' It is this verb that occurs in Prov. viii. 17.

35. their rock: LXX 'their Helper': see on lxxv. 5. 'Helper' is substituted in the LXX for 'God,' because the latter word occurs already in the verse: see on lxxv. 5.

redeemer: for the sense of the Hebrew word (*go'el*) see on lxxiv. 2.

36. flattered: Heb. 'deceived,' 'beguiled.' They acted as if they could deceive Him: so 'they lied,' &c. Cf. Isa. xxix. 13.

37. right: the Hebrew word is cognate with the verb, rendered 'set . . . aright,' in verse 8, and must be explained in a similar way: it denotes the contrary of being unfaithful.

But he, being full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, 38
and destroyed *them* not:
Yea, many a time turned he his anger away,
And did not stir up all his wrath.
And he remembered that they were but flesh; 39
A wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
How oft did they rebel against him in the wilderness, 40
And grieve him in the desert!
And they turned again and tempted God, 41
And provoked the Holy One of Israel.
They remembered not his hand, 42
Nor the day when he redeemed them from the adversary.
How he set his signs in Egypt, 43

---

38 f. The Divine compassion.

38. forgave *their* iniquity: Heb. 'repeatedly forgave their iniquity'; the other verbs in this verse have also the frequentative sense. The Hebrew can be translated by the present tense, and many moderns so render, but that is to cut off the verse from its connexion.

many a time turned he his anger away: the Hebrew is still stronger, 'He was wont to turn away His anger abundantly': *lit.* 'He was wont to abound in turning away His anger.'

39. God pitied man because his life is a short one.

40-43. *The people's rebellion in the wilderness:* verses 40 f. differ from verses 17 f. in language only.

40. rebel against (or 'defy') and 'grieve' are found together in Isa. lxiii. 10.

41. they turned again: rather, 'they tempted God once more.'

provoked: better, 'pained.'

the Holy One of Israel: i. e. the Holy One who is the God of Israel. The adjective 'Holy' (One) came to be a name of God, so that Holy One of Israel = God of Israel. The expression originated with Isaiah (see Isa. vi. 3), and it occurs in no writings earlier than his. Perhaps, as Marti, A. B. Davidson, and others suggest, it is equivalent to 'transcendent'; 'the Transcendent One of Israel': only it must be borne in mind that the transcendence implied is moral.

42. his hand: i. e. His powerful acts on their behalf: cf. 'powerful hand,' Exod. iii. 19, vi. 1.

43 begins a long relative sentence which seems to extend

And his wonders in the field of Zoan;
44 And turned their rivers into blood,
And their streams, that they could not drink.
45 He sent among them swarms of flies, which devoured them;
And frogs, which destroyed them.
46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller,
And their labour unto the locust.

---

to the end of verse 55. Perhaps the 'two' (or 'who') belongs to verses 43 f. only, so the E.VV.

43. See Exod. x. 1 f.: cf. Ps. cv. 27.

In verses 44-51 we have an enumeration of the plagues, but only such as are recorded in the Pentateuchal source called the 'Jahwist' (Yahwist, J) (or the Jehovist, JE: see Introduction to this Psalm). Of the ten plagues seven[1] are here referred to, the plagues of lice, boils (P), and darkness (E) not being named at all. It looks therefore much as if the Jahwist document was alone known to the writer: our Pentateuch could not then have existed, an important fact in deciding the date of the Psalm, and in its bearing on the date and authorship of the Pentateuch itself. The order in which they are referred to agrees with that of Exodus in the case of the first and last only. Perhaps the Psalmist does no more than draw upon his memory without aiming at literal accuracy, or he may follow some principle of arrangement that is not obvious to us.

44. The first plague: see Exod. vii. 17-25, and cf. Ps. cv. 29.

rivers: the Hebrew word in the singular means the Nile, and in the plural the Nile and its canals.

45. Fourth and second plagues.

swarms of flies: render, 'dogflies': so LXX, and most moderns. The Hebrew has but one word, and it occurs only here, in Exod. viii. 20-32, and in cv. 31, in each case in reference to this fourth plague. Its etymology is uncertain, but Jewish expositors say the word = 'a mixture' (of vermin).

frogs: see Exod. viii. 1-15: cf. cv. 30.

46. The eighth plague: Exod. x. 1-20: cf. Ps. cv. 34.

their increase: what the land yielded: the harvest of the land (lxvii. 6).

caterpiller: the word so rendered is not in Exodus: it is but another name for locust, brought in for the parallelism. Cf. Joel i. 4, ii. 25, where other names occur.

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[1] Obtained by altering the text of verse 48: otherwise six and not seven plagues are referred to; see on that verse.

He destroyed their vines with hail, 47
And their sycomore trees with frost.
He gave over their cattle also to the hail, 48
And their flocks to hot thunderbolts.
He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, 49
Wrath, and indignation, and trouble,

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47. The seventh plague. Exod. ix. 13-34 : cf. Ps. cv. 33.

vines : sycomores : on the Egyptian paintings grapes and figs are often found. Sycomore wood was largely used in the making of mummy cases.

frost : the Hebrew word occurs here only, and it cannot be explained from the cognates. Something which, like hail, could destroy the trees is meant. Though most of the versions take 'frost' to be the meaning, the parallelism and sense favour the rendering of the R.V. marg., 'great hail-stones.'

48. Fifth plague : that of murrain of beasts, Exod. ix. 17. Render : 'And He gave over their beasts to the murrain, And their cattle to burning fevers.'

cattle : domestic animals in general are meant, as in Exod. xxii. 4 ; Num. xx. 4, 8, 11 ; *lit.* 'beasts of burden,' as in Gen. xlv. 17 : cf. xliv. 3, 13.

hail : read as in Exod. ix. 3, 'murrain' : so Sym., two Hebrew MSS., and many moderns : 'hail' is mentioned in verse 47. The Hebrew consonants are the same in both words, only they are differently arranged. We thus get a reference to a fifth plague.

flocks : *lit.* 'possessions' : then domestic animals in general, horses, asses, oxen, &c. : the word has here the same sense exactly as 'cattle,' parallelism requiring another word, otherwise the same word would have been repeated.

thunderbolts : render, 'pestilences' : it is simply another word for 'murrain.'

Duhm thinks verses 49 f. an interpolation, having no reference originally to the Egyptian plagues. But external evidence is wholly against him, and as regards internal evidence, that is often a matter of feeling and even of temperament.

49. The tenth plague, verses 49-51.

It is probable that verses 49 f. are intended to lead up to verse 51. The 'letting loose of His anger' and the 'making of a level road for His anger' were all in order that He might inflict upon the Egyptians the severest of all the plagues.

Render : 'He let loose against them the heat of His anger, Wrath, fury, and distress, Letting loose (these) evil messengers.'

A band of angels of evil.
50 He made a path for his anger;
He spared not their soul from death,
But gave their life over to the pestilence;
51 And smote all the firstborn in Egypt,
The chief of their strength in the tents of Ham:
52 But he led forth his own people like sheep,
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
53 And he led them safely, so that they feared not:
But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary,

A band: read the participle 'sending,' changing the vowels and omitting the last consonant, which closely resembles the preceding one and was added in error. The word in the M.T. is generally translated 'a sending,' or 'a mission': it occurs besides in Eccles. viii. 8 only.

angels of evil: better, 'evil messengers,' i. e. His anger, wrath, &c. They are, however, called evil because they bring evil.

50. made a path: *lit.* 'levelled a path': made a level road: i.e. He removed restraints to His anger, giving it full play.

pestilence: the word used in Exod. ix. 7 of the murrain of beasts: see on verse 48.

51. The chief of their strength: *lit.* 'the firstling of manly strengths': i. e. according to a common Hebrew idiom 'the firstlings of manly strength.'

Ham is not here a personal name. See Gen. x. 6. It is simply a parallel name for Egypt: see on cv. 23.

In verses 52-55 we have a summary account of God's guidance of Israel in the wilderness until they reached the promised land.

52. led forth: the Hebrew verb is often used of the journeys of the Israelites in the wilderness: cf. Exod. xv. 13-17.

like sheep: rather, 'like a flock' (of small cattle, sheep, goats, &c.).

wilderness: used here in its original sense, a tract of pasture land: so in lxv. 13 and Joshua ii. 22.

like a flock: rather, 'like a herd' (of large cattle, oxen, cows, &c.).

53. so that they feared not: though their enemies feared greatly, Exod. xiv. 25.

overwhelmed: see Exod. xv. 5, 10: cf. xiv. 28.

54. to the border of his sanctuary: render, 'to His holy

To this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.
He drove out the nations also before them, 55
And allotted them for an inheritance by line,
And made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.
Yet they tempted and rebelled against the Most High God, 56
And kept not his testimonies;
But turned back, and dealt treacherously like their fathers: 57
They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.
For they provoked him to anger with their high places, 58
And moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

---

territory': i. e. the Holy Land. The word rendered 'border' in the O. T. often = 'bordered territory.'

this mountain: rather, 'to the mountain land which,' i. e. Canaan. The same word means 'mountain' and 'mountain land,' and the pronoun which usually means 'this' has sometimes, especially in poetry, the force of a relative: so in lxxiv. 2.

55. Render: 'And he drove out from before them (the Israelites) the (heathen) nations, And made their land (*lit.* 'them') become by lot the land of the inheritance,' &c.

allotted: the Hebrew word means commonly, as here, simply 'to grant,' with no reference to lot: cf. the English verb 'to allot.'

them: i. e. their territory; see below.

an inheritance by line: render, 'the land of the inheritance,' i. e. the land which they were to inherit. The word translated 'line' means also territory or land measured by line. See on verse 54 ('border'). In this verse, as in Joshua xxiii. 4 and often, nations are said to be allotted, though it is their territory that is meant.

56–58. *Ingratitude and rebellion of the people after the settlement in Canaan*, i. e. *in the time of the Judges* (see verse 60). In these verses there is a return to the thought pervading verses 9–42, the faithlessness of the people.

56. testimonies: rather, 'admonitions': 'solemn charges.'

57. deceitful bow: the same figure in Hos. vii. 16: a bow that disappoints its owner by not hitting the point aimed at: or that is so loosely spanned that it will not throw the arrow far enough if at all.

58. high places: the author of this Psalm antedates centralization of worship in Israel by many centuries. Worship at the high places was allowed until the reign of Josiah (d. B. C. 609).

59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth,
And greatly abhorred Israel:
60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent which he placed among men;
61 And delivered his strength into captivity,
And his glory into the adversary's hand.
62 He gave his people over also unto the sword;
And was wroth with his inheritance.
63 Fire devoured their young men;
And their maidens had no marriage-song.
64 Their priests fell by the sword;
And their widows made no lamentation.

59-64. *Once more God punishes them, giving them over now to their enemies.*

59. When God heard: omit 'When': it is not in the Hebrew.

greatly abhorred: better, 'utterly rejected.'

60. tabernacle: the Hebrew word (*mishkan*='dwelling-place') is the technical term for the elaborate structure which, according to the priestly writer (P) and Chronicles, formed the sanctuary in the wilderness. The Shiloh sanctuary is called also a temple (1 Sam. i. 9): it never took the place of the smaller sanctuaries, nor was it ever an exclusively Northern sanctuary, so that it is not the Northern Kingdom that is alluded to in this verse.

which he placed: read, 'in which he dwelt,' changing the vowels only. So the versions.

61. See 1 Sam. iv. 11, 21.

his strength: i.e. the ark; so called on account of its disastrous effect on Israel's foes: see 1 Sam. v. 7, vi. 19ff., and see on cxxxii. 8.

his glory: see 1 Sam. iv. 21 f.

62. See 1 Sam. iv. 2, 10, 17.

his inheritance: the people whom He had chosen to be His in a special way: even with them was He enraged.

63. had no marriage-song: *lit.* 'were not praised' (in song) because the young men who would have sung their praise had been consumed in the fire of war (Num. xxi. 28). Better read 'mourned not' (cf. verse 64^b); only the vowels need be changed. The unmarried men were unmourned by their lovers, and priests were unwept by their widows. Besides dying in war prematurely, they were unlamented by those nearest to them.

64. made no lamentation. In the versions the passive is used

Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, 65
Like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.
And he smote his adversaries backward : 66
He put them to a perpetual reproach.
Moreover he refused the tent of Joseph, 67
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim ;
But chose the tribe of Judah, 68
The mount Zion which he loved.
And he built his sanctuary like the heights, 69
Like the earth which he hath established for ever.
He chose David also his servant, 70

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as in the M. T. of verse 63^b. Virgins were not praised, nor widows lamented. But the active must be read in both cases, see on verse 63.

65 f. *Yahweh once more pitied and delivered His people.*

65. Render : 'Then the Lord awaked as one asleep' (awakes), 'As a giant overcome with wine' (awakes). The Hebrew verb rendered incorrectly **that shouteth** is common in Arabic, but occurs nowhere else in the O. T. It is supported by the versions and by parallelism.

66. And he smote, &c. : the victories gained under Samuel, Saul, and David are referred to.

67–69. *Zion chosen instead of Shiloh.*

67. he refused : better, 'he rejected.'

the tent (of Joseph) means here 'tribe,' as the parallelism shows (**tribe of Ephraim**), so in lxxxiii. 6. The same word in Arabic means people : cf. the use of 'house' in many languages for the people in it.

68. mount Zion : the royal mountain often stands for the royal city Jerusalem, see Additional Note, p. 368.

which he loved : see xlvii. 4, lxxxvii. 2.

69. The temple at Jerusalem is as unchangeably fixed as the mountains and as the earth.

heights : i. e. mountains.

70–72. *The choice of David as King*, following 1 Sam. xvi. 11, xvii. 34 ; 2 Sam. vii. 8.

70. David . . . his servant. The term 'servant of Jehovah' or ts equivalent is used in a select sense. It is applied to the prophets 2 Kings ix. 7, xvii. 13 ; Jer. vii. 25 and often), to the Levitical ingers in the temple (cxiii. 1, cxxxiv. 1, cxxxv. 1), and to such minent men as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Job.

And took him from the sheepfolds:
71 From following the ewes that give suck he brought him,
To feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.
72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart;
And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

79 A Psalm of Asaph.

1 O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance;
Thy holy temple have they defiled;

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71. ewes, &c.: *lit.* 'those that give suck': the same word occurs in Isa. xl. 11.

To feed: *lit.* 'to shepherd'; the ruler is often viewed as a shepherd in the O. T. There may be an implied reference to David's having been a shepherd-boy. The survey ends with David: Why?

PSALM LXXIX.

Theme. God's aid invoked in a time of great national distress.

I. *Contents.* (1) The complaint. The land is invaded, the temple defiled, Jerusalem lies in ruin, God's people either slaughtered or dishonoured (verses 1–4).

(2) The prayer. God is entreated to pardon His people and to intervene on their behalf (verses 5–13).

Most Psalms of this kind, threnodes, have two principal parts, complaint and prayer: see Ps. cii. Pss. lxxiv, lxxix have many words and expressions in common.

II. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm goes with Ps. lxxiv, though some say lxxiv implies the destruction of the temple (as in B. C. 586) and the present Psalm its defilement. But the distinction cannot be sustained: see 2 Macc. viii. 2–4. A Maccabean date would suit both Psalms, but no more than this can be said. The particularism of both Psalms accords well with the revival of nationalism during the Syrian persecution: see on lxxiv (*Contents*).

1–4. *The complaint.*

1. the heathen: *lit.* 'nations': but in the plural the Hebrew means 'heathen nation,' 'Gentiles.' The same Hebrew word is translated 'Gentiles' in Judges iv. 2, 13, 16 and in Mal. i. 11, the word which in the N. T. translates the Greek *ethne*.

inheritance: the word denotes generally God's people, the Israelites (lxxiv. 2, lxxviii. 62, 71): here, however, it = 'the land in which they dwell.' Perhaps Jerusalem is meant: see Exod. xv. 17.

defiled: no proof that it was not destroyed, see Ezek. xxv. 3.

They have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be 2
meat unto the fowls of the heaven,
The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood have they shed like water round about 3
Jerusalem;
And there was none to bury them.
We are become a reproach to our neighbours, 4
A scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
How long, O LORD, wilt thou be angry for ever? 5
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

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2. saints: better, 'favoured ones,' i. e. those who are objects of the Divine favour, see vol. i. p. 360 f.

3. This verse is quoted in 1 Macc. vii. 16 with the ordinary formula of quotation from scripture. The Psalmist laments loudly not only the relentless butchery of the enemy, but also, and especially, the fact that the bodies could not be buried. It was regarded among many ancient nations (see Homer), and especially among the Hebrews, as a dreadful calamity to be deprived of burial after death, see lxxiv. 14, lxxviii. 64; Jer. vii. 32 f., viii. 2, ix. 21, xv. 3, xvi. 4, xix. 7; and cf. Deut. xxviii. 26, and also 1 Macc. i. 37.

4. This verse almost *verbatim* as xliv. 14; Duhm thinks it inserted here from that Psalm.

5–13. *The prayer.*

5. This verse almost *verbatim* as lxxxix. 47, render: 'How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou be angry? will thy jealousy burn like ire for ever?'

How long and **for ever** are characteristic expressions in Pss. xxiv and lxxix: see lxxiv. 10, lxxix. 5: cf. xiii. 2, lxxx. 4, lxxxix. 46. The very question 'how long' involves the belief in God's moral overnment of the world.

Verses 6 f. are found almost *verbatim* in Jer. x. 25. They are riginal in Jeremiah, since it is only in the prophetic context that he words are fully intelligible. Duhm holds that these verses vere not in the Psalm originally, since the thought of verse 6 is rst expressed and that of verse 7 has been already uttered. But uch subjective criticism has very little value.

The thought implied in verses 6 f. is: 'Manifest thy indignation wards thy foes, not towards us thy flock who uphold thy religion: t them suffer, not we: they deserve it, we do not.'

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that know thee not,
And upon the kingdoms that call not upon thy name.
7 For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his habitation.
8 Remember not against us the iniquities of our forefathers:
Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us:
For we are brought very low.
9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name:
And deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

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6. kingdoms: in Jer. x. 25 families (subdivisions of tribes). The Psalmist has the better word, an argument favouring the view that he had the older text before him.

7. Cf. xiv. 4.

8. the iniquities of our forefathers: render, 'our former iniquities': so the ancient versions, Duhm, and Gunkel.

prevent us: i. e. 'come to meet us': in Old English 'prevent' meant 'to go before,' to anticipate, 'Let thy compassions be in front of us, so that we may meet them.' The same word in xxi. 4, lix. 11.

very low: the Hebrew verb means literally 'to be reduced in circumstances': and so 'to be impoverished.' But it means to be reduced in strength in cxvi. 6 and cxlii. 7, and that is probably its meaning here.

9 f. If thou, O Jehovah, wilt not come to our help for our own sake, Yet deliver us for the sake of thy own good name. Why should the heathen have occasion to say we have no God to help us?

9. God of our salvation: Hebrew makes a large use of the annexed noun instead of the adjective. The above expression = 'the God who delivers us': = 'the delivering God.' The Psalmist entreats God to be true to Himself, i. e. to deliver, seeing He is the Deliverer.

and purge away our sins: the word rendered 'purge away' means primarily 'to cover': then as to cover a crime is to forgive and forget, the word naturally came to mean 'to pardon.' The verb is used of appeasing an angry person, as in Gen. xxxii. 21, and in late parts of the O. T. (P, Ezek., &c.) of atoning for sin by sacrifice.

thy name: i. e. 'thine own self.' God's name stands for God as known. With pronominal suffix it has often the force of an emphatic pronoun. In lv. 6 'unto thee' is parallel to 'unto thy name' ('O Jehovah').

Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? 10
Let the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed
Be known among the heathen in our sight.
Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; 11
According to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to death;
And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom 12
Their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.
So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture 13
Will give thee thanks for ever:
We will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

For the Chief Musician; set to Shoshannim Eduth. **80**
A Psalm of Asaph.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, 1

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10. Wherefore, &c.: the same question in cxv. 2 and Joel ii. 17: cf. Exod. xxxii. 12; Ps. xlii. 3; Mic. vii. 10.

among the heathen: rather, (be made known) 'to the heathen': cf. 'in our sight' (*lit.* 'before our eyes').

11. preserve: read, 'release' or 'set free,' changing vowels only: so Pesh., Targ. The verb thus assumed occurs in cv. 20, cxlvi. 7.

those that are appointed to death: *lit.* 'sons of death,' but in Semitic the word 'son' denotes one having the property of: e. g. 'a son of wisdom' = 'a wise son,' &c. So 'sons of death' are men living a death-like (i. e. miserable) life. The expression is, however, generally interpreted as meaning 'men condemned to death,' see 1 Sam. xx. 31, xxvi. 16.

12. into their bosom: the folds of the garment above the girdle are used in the East as pockets for holding articles of various kinds.

13. sheep of thy pasture: rather, 'the flock of Thy shepherdng': 'the flock which thou dost shepherd': see lxxiv. 1 and xxx. 1.

PSALM LXXX.

Theme. Prayer for the return of the good estate of the Northern Kingdom.

Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;

I. *Title. Shoshannim Eduth* (='Lilies, a testimony') is no doubt the name of a song to the melody of which this Psalm was to be sung. The same melody is probably prescribed for Pss. xlv and lxx, though the title varies slightly. In the LXX and Vulg. very awkward attempts are made to translate the Hebrew name of this song ('For them who shall be changed').

II. *Contents.* The Psalm has the outward appearance of having three strophes or stanzas, each ending with the same refrain (verses 3, 7, and 19). But according to subject-matter it falls naturally into these six sections:

(1) God is entreated to come and restore the fortunes of the Northern Kingdom (verses 1–3).

(2) Surprise is expressed at God's continued anger and the consequent suffering of the people (verses 4–7).

(3) Israel is compared to a vine-tree carefully planted and for a while watched, and then given over to the slender mercies of ferocious beasts (verses 8–13).

(4) Prayer for the restoration of the Divine favour (verses 14–17).

(5) Israel's vow (verse 18).

(6) Closing refrain (verse 19).

III. *Authorship and Date.* Many and divergent have been the opinions put forth and defended as to the aim and age of this Psalm, and the fact that each opinion has been strenuously maintained shows how uncertain the evidence is.

It is implied in the Psalm that the Northern Kingdom is in great distress. The writer prays that the prosperity of former days may be restored. This is the only Psalm in which Benjamin is reckoned along with Ephraim and Manasseh as belonging to the Northern Kingdom. Joseph (=Ephraim and Manasseh) stands for the Northern Kingdom as being its most important constituent. This Psalmist was probably a member of the Northern Kingdom, living in the later years of that kingdom, say in the reign of Menahem, when the hand of Assyria was very heavy upon the Israelitish people. See 2 Kings xv. 17–22.

Pss. lxxx f. seem both to have sprung out of the Northern Kingdom, and the same was probably true of Pss. lxxvii f. (both 'Joseph' Psalms) in their original form. We have two prophets of the Northern Kingdom—Amos and Hosea, though the former was a native of Judah. Why should not the Northern Kingdom have its singers and its songs?

The date just proposed for this Psalm, a short time before B.C. 722 when Assyria conquered Israel, seems implied in the title of the LXX, which has: 'A Psalm concerning the Assyrians.'

Thou that sittest upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up 2
thy might,
And come to save us.
Turn us again, O God; 3
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts, 4

There is no allusion in the Psalm to the reunion of the two kingdoms, though the Targ. assumes the contrary, see on verse 3. Verses 12 f. show that the evils lamented in the Psalm are experienced in Palestine and not in any foreign land.

1–3. *Prayer for a return of past prosperity.*

1. Shepherd of Israel: see on lxxiv. 1.

cherubim: The ark taken to battle as a sign of the Divine presence had figures of cherubims on it (so P, &c.): perhaps, however, the clouds are meant: see on xviii. 10.

shine forth: i. e. make manifest thy power by delivering us: see l. 2, xciv. 1; Deut. xxxiii. 2.

2. Benjamin: Joseph and Benjamin were by the same mother, and are for that reason here associated. In Num. ii. 17 ff. Benjamin and Ephraim are associated. Some omit Benjamin here: rhythm would gain by this.

might: the Hebrew word is a common one for the valour of the soldier: see Judges viii. 21; Prov. viii. 14; Isa. iii. 25. God's valour is inactive—that is implied in the verb **stir up**. Another form of the same verb (Hiph.) would mean that His valour is asleep.

come: Heb. 'go,' 'depart,' i. e. for battle.

3. The words in this verse are a refrain which occurs also in verses 7 and 19.

Turn us again: i. e. restore our fortunes: bring back the prosperity we once had. Verses 5–8 prove that this is the sense intended, and not 'bring us back from exile,' see on lxxxv. 1.

And cause thy face to shine: i. e. look bright, pleasant, the reverse of angry: see Num. vi. 25, and cf. Ps. iv. 6.

and we shall be saved: rather, 'so that we may obtain deliverance.'

4–7. *Surprise and impatience at God's delay.*

4. Render: 'O Jehovah of Hosts. How long (will it be the case that) thou fumest with anger, notwithstanding the prayer of thy people?'

How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?
5 Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears,
And given them tears to drink in large measure.
6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours:
And our enemies laugh among themselves.
7 Turn us again, O God of hosts;
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

8 Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt:
Thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedst it.
9 Thou preparedst *room* before it,
And it took deep root, and filled the land.
10 The mountains were covered with the shadow of it,

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against the prayer: i. e. with thy people when they pray. The Hebrew can mean: 'notwithstanding the prayer,' &c.

5. Thou hast given them tears for their daily food: instead of eating and drinking as in better days they were wont to do, they spend their time in weeping: see on cii. 9.

large measure: the Hebrew means a 'tierce' or 'third' of something, though of what is unknown; *lit.* 'Thou makest them drink a tierce of tears.' Instead of **them** the LXX, Jero. have 'us' in both clauses of this verse: cf. verse 6.

6. strife: i. e. an object of strife. By transposing the second and third letters of the Hebrew word we obtain the word used in xliv. 14^b for the derisive shaking or wagging of the head, and this goes well with the parallel clause (**laugh,** &c.); so 'an object of head shaking unto,' &c.

our neighbours = our enemies (words varied for parallelism): the smaller nations or tribes in the immediate vicinity of Samaria (Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, &c.).

7. See on verse 3. For 'God of hosts' read 'Jehovah of hosts,' though the latter phrase makes bad Hebrew, and is probably shortened from 'Jehovah, God of hosts,' which is good Hebrew.

8–13. *Israel, once cared for by God, is now abandoned.*

8. a vine: for the figure see Gen. xlix. 22; Hos. i. 7; and especially Isa. v. 1–7.

Thou didst drive out . . . and plantedst: the same antithesis in xliv. 3.

9. Thou preparedst *room* before it: render: 'Thou didst make a clear place before it': i. e. remove whatever stood in the way of its free growth, e. g. stones, thorns, &c.: see Isa. v. 2.

10 f. The growth of the nation is compared to that of a vine-

And the boughs thereof were *like* cedars of God.
She sent out her branches unto the sea, 11
And her shoots unto the River.
Why hast thou broken down her fences, 12
So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?
The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, 13

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tree which spread southwards and northwards (verse 10), eastward and westward (verse 11): i. e. the nation brought from Egypt as a very little thing was so carefully watched and protected that it soon took possession of the whole land of Canaan: 'yet now thou leavest it to languish and die!'

10. The mountains: the mountainous land in the south is meant: the four quarters are thus mentioned: see Deut. xi. 24.

And the boughs thereof, &c.: translate: 'And the majestic cedars with its boughs.' The mountains of the south and the cedars of Lebanon in the north were alike covered: the mountains with the shadow, and the cedar-trees with the branches of this all-spreading vine.

cedars of God: in Hebrew, as also occasionally in Arabic, the added epithetic 'of God' (= Godlike) implies greatness, majesty: see xxxvi. 6; Job i. 16, and the rendering above. The phrase can hardly mean 'cedars planted by God,' i. e. those which men have not planted, for such cedars are less, not greater, than others.

11. She sent out: Heb. 'it' (the vine, fem. in Heb.) 'continually sent out,' &c.

branches: the Hebrew word denotes what grows out of the main hulk of the tree. The word rendered 'boughs' in verse 10 refers particularly to what grows out of the branches or higher part.

sea: i. e. Mediterranean, the only sea known to the ancient Israelites. Here it stands for the west.

the River: i. e. the Euphrates, the only considerable river about which the ancient Israelites thought much—the Nile was too far away.

12 f. The poet asks in blank amazement why He who had so long and so lovingly cared for His chosen people should now abandon them to cruel and destructive foes.

12. fences: that vineyards were fenced round is shown by Num. xxii. 24; Isa. v. 6. It is the boundary fortifications of land and cities that are meant.

13. The boar stands to the Israelite for the worst of beasts—unclean, savage, &c. **boar** and **wild beasts** do not represent any particular nation or nations.

doth ravage it: better, 'gnaws it.'

And the wild beasts of the field feed on it.
14 Turn again, we beseech thee, O God of hosts:
Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine,
15 And the stock which thy right hand hath planted,
And the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.
16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down:
They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,
Upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.

14-17. *Prayer that God's favour may be restored.*

14. Render: 'O Jehovah of Hosts, look once more, we beseech thee, from heaven, and see and visit this vine.'

God: read 'Jehovah' as in verse 7. The Hebrew is ungrammatical in both places.

15. Render: 'And protect that which thy right hand has planted.'

the stock: for the Hebrew word, which occurs nowhere else, and yields no possible sense, read, 'cover,' 'protect,' making a slight change in the text. Or, perhaps, the word is to be omitted and the verse to be joined immediately with the preceding one: 'and visit this vine (verse 16), which thy right hand has planted.'

And the branch, &c.: the following is a literal translation of the Hebrew: 'and over (the) son whom thou strengthenedst for thyself': but the preposition 'upon' suggests that the words are out of connexion, and the sense of the clause proves this. The words are taken, by a copyist's error, with very little change from 18^{b}, where they are wanted.

16. It: i.e. the vine: in verses 11 f. we have 'she' representing the same word, because in Hebrew the word for vine (*gephen*) is of feminine gender.

is burned: as fuel.

cut down: as useless: see Isa. xxxii. 12.

They perish: i.e. the Israelites who are symbolized by the vine. The metaphor is now given up. 'The vine is burnt,' &c., 'the people whom the vine stands for perish.'

17. Let thy hand be upon: to protect.

the man of thy right hand: i.e. the man whom thy right hand plantedst: the parallelism with the next clause shows this is the sense. Of course Israel is meant.

son of man is simply Hebrew idiom for 'human being.' See on lxxix. 11, and on lxxiii. 5.

whom thou madest strong: the Hebrew verb means here,

So shall we not go back from thee : 18
Quicken thou us, and we will call upon thy name.
Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts ; 19
Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

For the Chief Musician ; set to the Gittith. **81**
A Psalm of Asaph.

Sing aloud unto God our strength : 1

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as in Isa. xliv. 14, 'to rear' : the poet still harks back to the figure of the vine which God 'planted,' and 'reared.'

18. A vow to worship God if He hears the prayer now offered.

Quicken : an old English word meaning 'to bring to life' : then 'to revive one who is depressed and desponding' : this latter is the sense here and in Ps. cxix. verses 25, 37, 40, &c. See also lxxxv. 6.

19. See verses 3 and 7. Omit **God** and see on verse 7.

Psalm LXXXI.

Theme. Summons to keep some festival. Disobedience of Israel and its punishment.

I. *Title.* **Set to the Gittith :** i. e. to be sung to the tune called after Gath : cf. the tunes 'Haverfordwest,' 'Nottingham,' 'Bangor,' &c.

II. *Contents.* (1) Summons to keep festival (verses 1–5^b).

(2) Jehovah's claims upon Israel on account of His gracious doings for them in Egypt and in the wilderness (verses 5^c–10).

(3) Israel's ingratitude and disobedience (verses 11 f.).

(4) Blessings promised to obedience (verses 13–16).

In verses 1–5^b and verses 5^c–16 we have two originally quite independent Psalms. In the first there is a summons to keep some festival, and the spirit pervading this section is one of superabundant joyousness. In verse 5^c we are abruptly transferred into the heart of a loud lament over the unbelief of Israel notwithstanding the wonders of love wrought on their behalf in Egypt and in the wilderness. In this second section the nation is in no festive mood : it had sinned and was now suffering for that sin in some terrible way. Verses 5^c–16 resemble Ps. lxxviii and other didactic Psalms.

In verses 1–5^b we have probably a hymn chanted regularly at the beginning of the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, both of which were inaugurated at full moon by the blowing of trumpets. Though we have no definite evidence that trumpets were blown at either Passover or Tabernacles, there is evidence for believing that this took place at all the festivals.

Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
2 Take up the psalm, and bring hither the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the psaltery.
3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,
At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.
4 For it is a statute for Israel,
An ordinance of the God of Jacob.

III. *Authorship and Date.* Verses 1–5^b is a companion Psalm to Ps. lxxx, and, it is likely, also to Ps. lxxviii in its original form. This would make this small Psalm older than B.C. 722, when Samaria fell into Assyrian hands.

Verses 5^c–16 seem to presuppose Deut. xxxii (see verses 9, 16) and Jer. vii. 24 (see verses 13 f.). We may then assume that this Psalm (5^c–16) belongs to the reign of Josiah (d. B.C. 609) or to a later period.

1–5^b. *Summons to celebrate the festival.*

1. Sing aloud: Heb. 'sing with a loud piercing sound.'

God our strength: read, 'the God of our refuge,' i.e. 'the God who is our refuge.' No change in the consonants is required.

2. The verbs for **take up** and **bring hither** mean respectively 'to raise' and 'to give,' and both are used with the word 'voice' in the sense of putting forth, giving out: it is only by analogy that they are here applied to 'Psalm' and 'timbrel': render, 'Sing a Psalm and strike the timbrel.'

timbrel: the hand-drum of the Easterns; it resembled the small drum of negroes and of Christy minstrels. It was made of a stretched skin with a margin of wood around it.

For **harp** and **psaltery** substitute 'lyre' and 'harp': see Introd., ch. iv.

3. trumpet: Heb. *shofar*, i.e. the ram's horn trumpet. In the Pentateuch the blowing of the *shofar* is expressly prescribed in connexion with the year of Jubilee only: see Lev. xxv. 9. On this trumpet, and the metallic trumpet engraved on the arch of Titus, see Introd., p. 29 f.

on our solemn feast day: rather, 'for the day of our pilgrimage festival.'

4–5^b. Reason for keeping the feast. It was for that purpose appointed by Jehovah.

4. For it: i.e. the feast of verse 3.

ordinance: the Hebrew word means primarily what God as Ruler and Judge has enacted.

He appointed it in Joseph for a testimony, 5
When he went out over the land of Egypt:
Where I heard a language that I knew not.
I removed his shoulder from the burden: 6
His hands were freed from the basket.
Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; 7
I answered thee in the secret place of thunder;

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5. According to Duhm this verse ought to be reckoned with the following verses.

5ab. (He appointed) **it:** i.e. the festival; see verse 3.

in Joseph: in lxxx. 1 as well as here 'Joseph' and 'Israel' are used interchangeably.

testimony: 'solemn admonition': see Introd. to Ps. cxix, p. 254.

over (the land of Egypt): rather, 'against.' The reference is to what God did by way of punishing the Egyptians for their obduracy. It was then that God entered into those covenant relations with Israel out of which sprang the commemorative feasts.

5c–16. *The second Psalm.*

5c. Render: '[In Egypt] he [Israel] heard the language of one whom he knew not.' The words in brackets are probably to be supplied, having dropped out in the process of uniting the two Psalms into one. The verbs should be read in the third person with LXX, Pesh. When God revealed Himself to His chosen people in Egypt He was largely unknown to them. For other interpretations of these difficult words, see the larger commentaries.

6–10 contain, in summary, an account of what God did for the nation in Egypt and in the wilderness, and of what He commanded them in the covenant made with them on Sinai. It is God, who called them when as yet they knew not His voice, that speaks all through this section.

6. Read and render: 'I removed the burden from thy shoulder, Thy hands,' &c. In verses 6–10 Jehovah addresses Israel directly in the second person. In Egypt some Israelites had to carry heavy burdens on their shoulders; others had to carry with their hands baskets containing bricks, one being suspended from each end of a yoke which was laid across the shoulders.

7. in the secret place of thunder: better, 'at Suther Ra'am.' We have here a proper name parallel to 'the waters of Meribah'; though we do not elsewhere in the O.T. meet with this place name. If the words do not form a proper name (so A.R.V.) the

I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. [Selah
8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee:
O Israel, if thou wouldest hearken unto me!
9 There shall no strange god be in thee;
Neither shalt thou worship any strange god.
10 I am the LORD thy God,
Which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt:
Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11 But my people hearkened not to my voice;
And Israel would none of me.

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reference must be to the thunder cloud in which God dwells: see xviii. 11, 13, lxxvii. 17 ff.

waters of Meribah. For the two testings at Meribah see on lxxviii. 15. The proving or testing is mentioned as a proof of the Divine favour.

8. Hear, &c.: cf. with this Deut. vi. 4-9, the *Shema'* (= 'Hear') as the Jews call it.

testify: the verb in Hebrew means to solemnly exhort or charge: see l. 7, lxxxi. 9, and cf. the cognate noun 'testimony' in verse 5 (see on).

9 f. An epitome of Exod. xx. 2-6.

9. strange god: another than Israel's own God, Jehovah: see xliv. 20; Isa. xliii. 12; Prov. ii. 16, v. 3, 20. A 'strange woman' is one who is not the man's wife = a harlot. Jehovah is married to Israel, and the latter is not to play the harlot by going after other gods: see Exod. xxxiv. 39; Deut. xxxi. 16. The word translated 'strange' in 9^b = 'foreign': so here 'a foreign god' is meant, i.e. a god worshipped by foreigners: see Deut. xxxii. 12. But the same thing is intended, the variety of expression in Hebrew being due to the needs of parallelism.

10. Render: 'I, Jehovah, am thy God Who,' &c.

Open thy mouth wide: i.e. be ready to take in my commandments as you do your food, then I will teach you: virtually the words mean, 'be teachable and I will teach.' So the Targ.

11 f. Israel ungrateful and rebellious. The words in verses 6-10 are in the main supposed to be spoken on Sinai, with slight changes to suit the occasion of the Psalm. But here God speaks about what followed. Notwithstanding the solemn charges and the gracious promises Israel was disobedient. These verses are taken, with but slight variation, from Jer. vii. 24: cf. Isa. xlviii. 17-19.

So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart, 12
That they might walk in their own counsels.
Oh that my people would hearken unto me, 13
That Israel would walk in my ways!
I should soon subdue their enemies, 14
And turn my hand against their adversaries.
The haters of the LORD should submit themselves unto him: 15
But their time should endure for ever.
He should feed them also with the finest of the wheat: 16
And with honey out of the rock should I satisfy thee.

A Psalm of Asaph. **82**

God standeth in the congregation of God; 1

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12. stubbornness: render, with the versions, 'lust' or 'sensual passion.'

13–16. Jehovah's promise of deliverance to the generation then living (not to the Israelites in the wilderness as LXX) on condition of obedience.

15. Render: 'Those who hate Jehovah would come cringing to them (my people), But their time (of anguish) would continue for ever.'

In verses 15 f. for **should** read 'would.' These verses described what would come about if only the Israelites were obedient.

submit themselves: the Hebrew means: 'come cringing, making a show of obedience, though inwardly rebellious.'

unto him: render: 'to them,' referring to 'my people' in verse 13. In Heb. 'people' is a singular noun, and it often takes pronouns and verbs in the singular, even when in the immediate context (see verse 14) the plural pronoun or verb is employed. Perhaps, however, Jehovah is meant.

their time: i. e. 'their time of distress.' Similarly in Heb. 'day' means often 'day of trouble': see xxxvii. 13.

16. For **He should** read 'I would.' Jehovah is still speaking.

finest of the wheat: *lit.* 'the fat,' i. e. the best. The expression is taken from Deut. xxxii. 14.

And with honey, &c.: taken from Deut. xxxii. 13.

thee: read 'them' (i. e. Israel) with LXX, Pesh., Jero.

PSALM LXXXII.

Theme. Jehovah, the Judge of the gods of the heathen, is entreated to put an end to their evil rule.

He judgeth among the gods.
2 How long will ye judge unjustly,
And respect the persons of the wicked? [Selah

I. *Contents.* (1) The tutelary gods of the heathen nations arraigned before Jehovah (verse 1).

(2) The evils on earth due to the misrule of these gods (verses 2–4).

(3) The folly and ultimate downfall of these gods (verses 5–7).

(4) Prayer that Jehovah may take the whole earth under His control and establish justice among men (verse 8).

The above analysis assumes that by 'gods' in verse 1 we are to understand the national gods of the heathen, who are supposed to live in heaven, controlling the affairs of the peoples they presided over, just as Jehovah, originally the national God of Israel, was supposed to rule over His own people. See Deut. iv. 19, xxix. 25, xxxii. 8: Isa. xxiv. 21: cf. Sir. xvii. 17.

The Hebrew word *Elohim*, meaning 'God' or 'gods' (of the heathen), is not once used in the O.T. for men in high position, judges, &c., nor for angels: the passages adduced to prove the contrary do nothing of the kind.

This Psalm resembles closely Ps. lviii, as commentators have generally pointed out: but the resemblance is closer than the bulk of these commentators have perceived, for the word rendered 'in silence' in lviii. 1 should be read 'O ye Gods' (so R.V. marg.), and these gods are no other than those of Ps. lxxxii.

The Israelites allowed the existence, though they disallowed the claims, of heathen deities. For a discussion of the development of thought about God see the works on O.T. theology.

There is very little in the Psalm to help in fixing

II. *Its Authorship and Date.* It was written at a time when things went badly with Israel, which is about all that can be said. The injustice and cruelty complained of might have been due to the Babylonians, Persians, Samaritans, or Syrians.

1. *Jehovah judging the gods.*

1. standeth: as judge: see Isa. iii. 13.

the congregation of God: the assembly of gods summoned by Jehovah in heaven. The national assembly of Israel is also called 'the congregation of Jehovah' (Num. xxvii. 17: cf. Ps. lxxiv. 2).

2–4. *The injustice and partiality shown on the earth.* Though it is men who actually act in the way described, their gods are responsible.

Judge the poor and fatherless: 3
Do justice to the afflicted and destitute.
Rescue the poor and needy: 4
Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.
They know not, neither do they understand; 5
They walk to and fro in darkness:
All the foundations of the earth are moved.
I said, Ye are gods, 6
And all of you sons of the Most High.
Nevertheless ye shall die like men, 7

---

3. Judge: i. e. protect, defend. The verb rendered judge means to rule, deliver, defend, &c.

poor: the Hebrew word means especially one reduced in position—one who has seen better days. The verb of the same root is found in lxxiv. 8, 'we are *brought* (very) *low*.'

fatherless: the Hebrew, like the cognate Arabic word, means orphan in the strict sense, i. e. one deprived of either parent or of both parents. But in the O.T. the term means in most if not all cases 'fatherless'; and it is so translated in every instance except in Lam. v. 2. The word has nearly always the idea of being destitute and helpless: and in the east much more than in the west, it is the father that is the bread-winner.

Do justice to: Heb. 'vindicate'; 'clear of charges (wrongly) brought against them.'

afflicted: i. e. here wronged by slanderers.

destitute: belonging to the poorer class, poor and poorly connected.

4. Rescue: therefore they are in the hands of their oppressors, and cannot of themselves escape.

poor and needy: the first word is identical in Hebrew with that so rendered in verse 3, but it is often joined to the word rendered 'needy' to denote one that has lost place and caste and is withal very poor.

5-7. These gods are in the dark, and will come to nought. God speaks now not *to* the heathen deities, but *of* them.

5. the foundations of the earth are moved: the basis of moral order is upturned. The same figure in xi. 3 and lxxv. 3: cf. Prov. ii. 10-15.

In 6 f. God addresses the heathen directly once more.

6. I said: i.e. I said truly: see John xviii. 37.

7. Nevertheless: though I described you truly as gods, ye shall die, &c.

And fall like one of the princes.
8 Arise, O God, judge the earth:
For thou shalt inherit all the nations.

83 A Song, a Psalm of Asaph.

1 O God, keep not thou silence:
Hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult:
And they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

---

like one of the princes: read, 'like a perishable human being': this gives good parallelism, and the Hebrew requires the insertion of but one consonant (*b*) in the word for 'princes.' Duhm reads 'like one of the demons' (see Gen. vi. 1–4), which involves less change in the text, but gives a less suitable sense.

8. Prayer that God may rule the earth.

Render: 'Do thou arise, O God, and judge' (= 'rule,' see on verse 3) 'the earth: For all nations are thy possession.'

PSALM LXXXIII.

Theme. Prayer for a judgement on the nations which have combined against Israel.

I. *Title.* This is the last of the twelve Asaph Psalms.

II. *Contents.* The Psalm has two natural divisions separated by Selah.

(1) Complaint followed by a description of the combined attack against Judah (verses 1–8).

(2) Prayer for the dispersion and downfall of the foe (verses 9–18).

III. *Authorship and Date.* We have in this Psalm a poetical description of the opposition to Israel in the poet's day, the national names being given as types. We know of no one period at which the peoples named were combined against Israel. The state of things described in 1 Macc. v might well have drawn from the poet the bitter wail, the pathetic prayer of this Psalm.

1–9. *The Complaint.*

1. A cry of distress. The language of this verse seems based on Isa. lxii. 1, 6 f. It is implied in the Hebrew of this verse that God (1) cannot speak—He is dumb. (2) He will not speak—He is silent. (3) He is indifferent—He is inactive. These distinctions may, however, be due to the parallelism.

2–5. *The conduct of the enemies described.*

2. have lifted up the head: an attitude of pride and defiance: see iii. 4, xxvii. 6.

They take crafty counsel against thy people, 3
And consult together against thy hidden ones.
They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from 4
being a nation;
That the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.
For they have consulted together with one consent; 5
Against thee do they make a covenant:
The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; 6
Moab, and the Hagarenes;
Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; 7
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre:
Assyria also is joined with them; 8

---

3. **thy hidden ones:** see xxvii. 5, xxxi. 20. LXX and Pesh. read 'thy favoured ones,' Aq., Sym., Jero. the singular—'thy hidden thing,' i. e. the temple: cf. Ezek. vii. 22.

4. **from being a nation:** that they may be no longer a nation. The same phrase in Jer. xlviii. 2: cf. Isa. vii. 8, xvii. 1.

5. Read: 'For they plot together with one heart, And against Thee they make a league.' The change required in the Hebrew for this rendering is very small.

with one consent: i. e. 'with one heart': see Jer. xxxii. 39: cf. Josh. ix. 2.

6–8. The confederate nations are enumerated in the following order. (1) Those dwelling south and south-east (verses 6, 7^{a}).
(2) Those living near the Mediterranean coast (verse 7^{b}).
(3) Assyria (north-east) and Edom (in the extreme south) (verse 8).

6. **tents:** i. e. 'tent-dwellers.' The word belongs also to Ishmaelites, 'the tent-folk' (or Beduins) 'of Edom and of the Ishmaelites': so Pesh.

Hagarenes or Hagrites: a people living in Gilead east of Jordan: see 1 Chron. v. 10, 19.

7. **Gebal:** a tribe living in the northern part of the Edomite mountain-land.

Ammon: for long the unrelenting foes of Israel: their home was east of Jordan.

Amalek: also bitter foes of Israel from olden times. They dwelt east of the Arabah and also in the desert of the Sinaitic peninsula. Philistia in the south and Tyre in the north would take in the whole of the country lying towards the Mediterranean coast.

8. **Assyria:** the ancient kingdom of Assyria is meant: an

They have holpen the children of Lot. [Selah
9 Do thou unto them as unto Midian;
As to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the river Kishon:
10 Which perished at En-dor;
They became as dung for the earth.

excellent example of the powerful and relentless foes with which Israel had to deal. This great power—the 'Rome of the East'—conquered the Northern Kingdom in B. C. 722, but was itself conquered by Babylon in B. C. 606.

They have holpen: Heb. as R. V. marg., 'They have been an arm': cf. Isa. xxxiii. 2: 'holpen' is Old English for 'helped.'

children of Lot: = 'the descendants of Lot,' i. e. the Moabites and Ammonites who have been already mentioned separately, but are here named afresh in order to say that Assyria helped them in their hostility. No particular historical incident is referred to, but a general attitude.

9–18. *Prayer that the enemy may be destroyed and confounded, and so brought to acknowledge the sovereignty of Jehovah.*

9–12. *The destruction desired for the enemy illustrated from past history.*

9. Midian: the reference is to the confederacy against Israel described in Judges 7 f.

Sisera, Jabin: the incident referred to is that in which Jabin, a Canaanitish king (see Joshua xi. 1 ff.), and Sisera his general were defeated by Barak and Deborah: see Judges iv f. Though, however, Sisera appears in Judges iv as Jabin's general, in Judges v (Deborah's Song) he comes before us as himself a Canaanitish King. We have probably in these chapters two different traditions.

river (Kishon): rather, 'wady' or 'winter torrent.' The victory was in no small measure due to the swelling of the Kishon: many of the enemy were carried away by its force (Judges v. 21).

10. En-dor: this village lay to the south of Mount Tabor, quite close to Nain, and is still known by its Biblical name. It is not mentioned in Judges as the scene of the defeat of Sisera. Taanach and Megiddo are, however, named in connexion with that defeat, and in the M. T. of Joshua xvii. 11, En-dor, Taanach, and Megiddo appear together, though in a critical text 'En-dor' must be omitted.

as dung: omit 'as' (it is not in the Hebrew) and render: 'they became dung for the ground.' They lay unburied—a great dishonour and calamity: see on lxxix. 3, and cf. 1 Macc. vii. 16: see also 2 Kings ix. 37; Jer. viii. 2.

Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb; 11
Yea, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna:
Who said, Let us take to ourselves in possession 12
The habitations of God.
O my God, make them like the whirling dust; 13
As stubble before the wind.
As the fire that burneth the forest, 14
And as the flame that setteth the mountains on fire;
So pursue them with thy tempest, 15
And terrify them with thy storm.

---

11. This verse harks back to Gideon's victory over the Midianites (verse 8): **Oreb** (= raven) and **Zeeb** (= wolf) were the generals (Judges vii. 25; Isa. x. 26), and **Zebah** and **Zalmunna** the kings (Judges viii. 5 ff., 12, 18 ff.) of Midian.

12. Who said: rather, 'Who have said': the 'Who' stands for Judah's present foes.

The habitations of God: the land given by God to Israel, and peculiarly His as the people are His: see xxiii. 2, lxxiv. 20. The LXX has 'the altar of God': or, according to some MSS., 'the sanctuary of God.' In Targ., Jero. 'beauty of God' is the rendering, the reference being to the temple: see on verse 3.

13–15. *The destruction desired for the enemy illustrated from nature.*

13. whirling dust: like the wheel-shaped figures made by the wind out of fading leaves, &c. The same expression occurs in Isa. xvii. 13. Thomson is inclined to think that the reference is to the globular heads of the wild artichoke. See *Land and Book* (1881), vol. i. p. 212.

stubble: 'chaff' conveys the sense better: i. e. the empty iusks of corn and grain. Threshing-floors were and are still on iigh levels, so that the wind may drive the chaff away.

14. fire . . . forest: a burning forest is one of the wildest scenes n nature.

mountains: thorns and briars grow luxuriantly on the nountains, and in the hot season they may often be seen all blaze. See Thomson, *Land and Book* (1881), vol. ii. p. 292.

15. So pursue them: there is no need with Kirkpatrick to ender—'So shalt thou pursue them.' The Hebrew tense impf.) used here often expresses a wish, like the optative in ireek: 'So mayest thou pursue them,' &c.

16 Fill their faces with confusion;
That they may seek thy name, O LORD.
17 Let them be ashamed and dismayed for ever;
Yea, let them be confounded and perish:
18 That they may know that thou alone, whose name is JEHOVAH,
Art the Most High over all the earth.

84 For the Chief Musician; set to the Gittith.
A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 How amiable are thy tabernacles,

16–18. *Prayer that the enemy may through their calamities be brought to acknowledge Jehovah.*

16. confusion: rather, 'disgrace,' 'ignominy,' or 'dishonour.'

thy name = thee. God's name is God Himself as revealed. But the phrase God's name is often simply another way of saying God Himself.

17. Render: 'Let them be foiled and dismayed for ever: Let them become pale with shame and perish.'

18. That they may know: better, 'That they may get to know,' so the Hebrew.

that thou alone, &c. The rendering in R. V. marg. ('that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art,' &c.) is favoured by the Hebrew punctuation (accents), but the R. V. gives the sense intended.

Psalms lxxxiv–lxxxix constitute a Yahwistic appendix to the Asaph Psalms lxxiii–lxxxiii, though the rest of Books II and III (Pss. xlii–lxxxiii) are Elohistic: see Introd. to Book III, p. 37. The Divine name *Elohim* does, however, occur in this small group more than one-third as many times as *Yahweh*.

PSALM LXXXIV.

Theme. Longing for communion with God in the temple. A pilgrim song.

I. *Title.* **set to the Gittith:** see on Ps. lxxxi, *Title.*

sons of Korah. Concerning the man Korah and the guild of Korahites see p. 37 f. and vol. i. p. 220. There was a Korahite hymn-book, one that arose in the guild of that name, and those Psalms which have 'Korahites' ('Sons of Korah') in the title formed part of that hymn-book.

II. *Contents.* It is a pilgrim song.

(1) Just entering Jerusalem, with the temple in sight, the

O Lord of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the 2
  Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.
Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, 3

---

pilgrim expresses his longing for the temple, God's house, where rest is to be found (verses 1-4).

(2) Within Jerusalem, perhaps within the temple courts, he tells of the happiness of those who seek unto God (verses 5-8).

(3) The joy obtained in the worship of Jehovah (verses 9-12).

The language and thought of Pss. 42 f. (one Psalm originally) and of the present Psalm are much alike, and they have, many think, one author and one date.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm has been traced to many periods from David's day (Hengstenberg, Delitzsch) to the Maccabean age (Hitzig, Duhm). The temple was standing, and it had two altars (verse 3), which prove that the Psalm is post-exilic (see on verse 3): but nothing more definite than that can be said with any certainty. Whenever composed, this Psalm is one of the sweetest and most artistic in the Psalter.

Like Pss. xlii f. the present Psalm makes personal communion with God consist too exclusively of external worship at the temple, but the former is by no means lost in the latter, and throughout this triad of Psalms there breathes a blessed intimacy with God not unworthy of the greatest mystics.

1 f. *The Pilgrim's longing for the temple.*

1. amiable: rather, 'lovely' or 'dear.' 'Amiable' is now used of persons, never of things.

tabernacles: render, 'dwelling': the plural is used because the temple building (the house) and its courts are embraced. The Hebrew word is not that used for the booths dwelt in during the feast of Tabernacles: see on lxxviii. 60.

2. longeth: the LXX uses the same word here that Paul employs for the spirit's longing after 'the habitation which is from heaven.' 2 Cor. v. 2.

fainteth: languishes, pines away: see on cxix. 81.

My heart and my flesh = my whole being: the heart and lesh are mentioned together in xvi. 9, xxxi. 10, lxiii. 2, lxxiii. 26.

cry out: see on lxxxi. 1 ('sing aloud').

living God: besides here only in xlii. 2.

3 f. *Those who dwell in God's house are happy.*

3. The sense of the verse is:—'As the sparrow and the swallow ave nests in which they rest and find comfort, so have I in the

And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay
her young,
Even thine altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King, and my God.
4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house:
They will be still praising thee. [Selah
5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;

---

temple, my resting-place, my joy.' The end of the verse seems to have dropped out: or perhaps the poet leaves it to be supplied by the reader. On account of the omission of such words as '(Thine altars, &c.) are my joyous abode,' it used to be thought that the birds are pictured as making their nests on the roofs, &c. of the temple. The force of the words was then taken to be—'The birds even share my longing to be associated with Thy house.' But the care with which the temple buildings were cleansed makes it impossible to think of birds building nests in any part of the sacred structure.

sparrow: The Hebrew word stands for any small bird.

swallow: read 'dwelling' (*dor* for *deror*): 'Yea the little bird has found its home and dwelling—a nest for herself,' &c. So Duhm.

altars: there was but one altar in the temple of Solomon and in that sketched by Ezekiel (the table of Shewbread can be hardly reckoned as an altar). But in the later literature mention is made of two altars, the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense (Golden altar): see Num. iii. 31 (P), and 1 Macc. i. 21. The occurrence of the plural here proves that the Psalm is post-exilic. Perhaps there is on this verse an implied allusion to the altar as an asylum, a place of safety: see Exod. xxi. 13 f.

O LORD of hosts, &c.: note the heaping up of names for God, and cf. l. 1.

4. Blessed: i. e. 'happy' in the external sense—'well situated,' 'prosperous': so the Greek word *makarios* (Matt. v. 3–11) and the Latin *beatus*. Another Hebrew word (*baruk*) rendered 'blessed' has the same literal sense as the English word and as the Latin *benedictus*.

They will be still praising thee: better, 'They will continue to praise thee.'

5–8. *Having reached Jerusalem, the pilgrim sings of the happiness of those who appear before God to worship Him.*

5. Blessed: see on verse 4; 'happy' (without the hap) would be nearer the original.

In whose heart are the high ways *to Zion.*
Passing through the valley of Weeping they make it a 6
place of springs;
Yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings.
They go from strength to strength, 7
Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.
O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: 8
Give ear, O God of Jacob. [Selah

---

whose strength: read, 'whose refuge': a letter (*m*) has fallen out of the Hebrew through the coming together of two identical letters. So apparently the LXX and Pesh.

In whose heart are the high ways *to Zion*: Heb. 'in whose heart (are) highways,' out of which no ingenuity can make sense. The usual interpretation is: 'who have set their minds on the (three) annual pilgrimages,' but the Hebrew word so translated never means pilgrimages. Read for this word 'confidence' (found in Job iv. 6) and render: 'in whose heart there is confidence' (plural of intensity): this suits the parallelism well.

6. Render: 'Who passing through (or crossing) the valley of Baka (=balsam) He makes it a place of springs: yea, the early rain covers it with pools.'

The Hebrew word *baka* does not mean **Weeping:** it is the name of a balsam-tree which grows in very dry places only. God makes for His people waterless valleys to abound with water.

they make it: better change one vowel and read with LXX 'He makes it.'

early rain: that which follows the seed sowing and begins about November. See Joel ii. 23. The LXX, Pesh. render 'lawgiver,' an impossible sense here, though, perhaps, allowed by the Hebrew. Targ., Jero. have 'teacher,' a very common meaning of the Heb. word.

blessings: read 'pools,' changing one vowel only. In the waterless balsam valley those who look to Jehovah find fresh fountains and refreshing pools.

7. from strength to strength: instead of losing strength on the journey, as might have been expected, they become ever stronger: see Isa. xl. 13.

Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion: read with some vowel change and one consonant change, 'They see God (even) God in Zion.' The LXX and Pesh. support this change indirectly. The Massorites here and elsewhere tried to avoid the expression 'seeing God.'

9 Behold, O God our shield,
And look upon the face of thine anointed.
10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God is a sun and a shield:
The LORD will give grace and glory:
No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12 O LORD of hosts,
Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

85 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1 LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land:

9–12. *The joy felt in the worship of Jehovah.*

9. Render, as in the R. V. marg., 'Behold our shield, O God.' 'Our shield' and 'thine anointed' are parallel words. The King is called a shield in lxxxix. 19, where 'our shield' and 'our king' stand in parallelism to each other.

10. Probably this verse is a liturgical addition.

For: render, 'surely.'

a day: a feast day seems meant. The LXX, Pesh., P. B. V. have 'one day.'

a thousand: i. e. a thousand days elsewhere.

I had rather be a doorkeeper: better, 'I had rather be on the threshold in God's house than to dwell in (= inside) the tents of wickedness.'

11. sun: only here in the O. T. is God compared to the sun, probably on account of the prevalence of sun worship. Perhaps we should read 'battlement,' the word for 'sun' with a feminine ending, found in Isa. liv. 12 (R. V. 'pinnacle'), so called because it reflected the sun's rays: 'battlement' and 'shield' would go well together.

PSALM LXXXV.

Theme. Prayer for a restoration of favour.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for a return of prosperity (verses 1–7).

In 1–3 Jehovah's mercies in the past are recalled.

In 4–7 Prayer is offered that the former prosperity may return.

(2) Strong confidence in the issue of the prayer (verses 8–13).

Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, 2
Thou hast covered all their sin. [Selah
Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: 3
Thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.
Turn us, O God of our salvation, 4
And cause thine indignation toward us to cease.
Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? 5

According to Jewish tradition 1-7 was said or sung by the people, 8-13 by the priests.

It is best to translate the verbs in verses 1-3 as pluperfects (Ewald) and not as English perfects (E. VV.), and still less as precatives (Smend, Cheyne (2) &c.) expressing a wish: it is doubtful whether the 'precative perf.' exists in Hebrew.

II. *Authorship and Date*. Some period of national suffering is implied in the Psalm, but whether that was due to the Samaritan or Syrian persecution or to some other cause we have no means of determining.

1-3. *Jehovah's former mercies recalled.*

1. thou hast been: render, 'hadst been': so render all the verbs in verses 1-3; see under *Contents.*

brought back the captivity: render: 'Thou hast restored he fortunes.' So the expression has been explained since Ewald's time. In Job xlii. 10 it can mean nothing else. There s no necessary reference in the words, properly interpreted, to he Exile.

2. forgiven: *lit.* 'lifted up,' as if a burden; so Ps. xxii. 5.

iniquity: sin regarded as a perversion of what is right.

covered: so that it cannot be seen; see Neh. iii. 37.

sin: the Hebrew and the corresponding Greek words denote missing of the mark. Both these words for sin meet in xxii. 5.

3. taken away (all thy wrath): Heb. 'gathered in,' 'drawn ack' (after it had gone forth); cf. civ. 29; 1 Sam. xiv. 19; Joel . 15.

Thou hast turned . . . anger: render: 'Thou hast turned vay from the heat of thy anger.' So LXX, Jero. The Hebrew erb is often intransitive as in Ezek. xiv. 6, xviii. 30, 32. The esh. drops the 'from,' and is followed by Schrader and Duhm, Thou hadst turned away the heat of thy anger.'

4-7. *Prayer for the return of former favour.*

Turn us: render, 'return we entreat thee' (changing the st syllable—*nu* to *na*).

Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?
6 Wilt thou not quicken us again:
That thy people may rejoice in thee?
7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD,
And grant us thy salvation.
8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak:
For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints:
But let them not turn again to folly.
9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him;
That glory may dwell in our land.
10 Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
11 Truth springeth out of the earth;

---

6. Render: 'Mayest thou, O God, once more revive us,' &c. Only one word in Hebrew (the first) needs changing, and in that only the order of the letters.

quicken: see on lxxx. 18.

8-13. *Confidence in the issue of the prayer.*

8. Render: 'Let me hear (listen to) what Jehovah says: is it not that He speaks peace towards His people and towards His favoured ones, and hope for them that turn' (to Him)? Numerous changes in the text are required to justify this translation, but with very few exceptions the consonants are the same.

saints: better, 'favoured ones': see on lxxix. 2.

But let them not turn again to folly: a singular break in the run of the clauses, more manifest in the Hebrew than in the English. Read: 'and to those who turn their heart to Him': so the LXX, Baethgen. The requisite changes in the Hebrew consonants are unimportant.

9. glory: i. e. the glory of God.

10. Mercy and truth: rather, 'loving kindness' (on God's part) 'and faithfulness' (on man's). God's loving delivering hand never fails when man is true to Him, turning aside from idols.

Righteousness: in the sense of Isa. xl-lxvi. His faithfulness to deliver.

peace: man's well-being; cf. the greeting rendered in Hellenistic Greek as in English too narrowly by 'Peace to you.'

11. Truth: i. e. (man's) faithfulness towards God: this is human, grows out of the earth, i. e. in men's hearts.

righteousness: rather, (God's) faithfulness to give as in verse 10; this looks down from heaven.

And righteousness hath looked down from heaven.
Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; 12
And our land shall yield her increase.
Righteousness shall go before him; 13
And shall make his footsteps a way *to walk in.*

A Prayer of David. 86

Bow down thine ear, O LORD, and answer me; 1

---

12. Note the connexion between moral conduct and external prosperity. If the people are faithful to Jehovah, He will make their land productive. See Isa. iv. 2; Zech. iii. 8: cf. Hag. i. 10 f.

13. This verse is of uncertain interpretation; see the larger commentaries. The likeliest sense is conveyed in the following free rendering: 'His faithfulness to deliver goes before Him: and it makes a path for Him to walk in': i.e. this faithfulness is present wherever Jehovah is, and it is the norm according to which He acts.

PSALM LXXXVI.

Theme. Petitions for pity, help, guidance, and protection.

I. *Title.* This is the only 'David' Psalm in Book III.

Prayer: the Hebrew word (found at the close of Ps. lxxii) means primarily an appeal to God to protect the wronged against wrongdoers. The Psalms having this word in the title (xvii, lxxxvi, cii, cxlii) formed originally a group.

II. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for pity and help (verses 1–7).

(2) Acknowledgement of Jehovah's incomparableness (verses 8–10).

(3) Prayer for guidance (verses 11–13).

(4) Prayer for protection (verses 14–17).

This Psalm is a mosaic made up of citations from different parts of the O. T., and it had no doubt a liturgical origin.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of the Psalm on other scriptures proves that it is of late date, certainly post-exilic, but beyond that the Psalm does not justify us in going.

1–7. *Prayer for pity and help: each petition is supported by a reason.*

1 f. Render: 'Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and answer me, O thou my God (from verse 2), For I am afflicted and poor: 2. O keep my soul (=me), for I am the object of thy loving-kindness: save thy servant who' (=because he) 'trusts in thee.'

Bow down thine ear: a common formula in prayer: see xvii. 6, xxxi. 32; Prov. xxii. 17; Isa. xxxvii. 17.

For I am poor and needy.
2 Preserve my soul; for I am godly:
O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.
3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord;
For unto thee do I cry all the day long.
4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant;
For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive,
And plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer;
And hearken unto the voice of my supplications.
7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee;
For thou wilt answer me.
8 There is none like unto thee among the gods, O Lord;

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poor and needy: from xl. 17 (lxx. 5), see lxxxii. 4, cix. 22, and cf. xxv. 16, lxxxii. 4; translate, 'afflicted and needy': see on lxxxii. 3 f. Literal poverty is hardly meant.

2. thy servant: the word 'servant' is often used in Hebrew in polite speech for the personal pronoun: thus 'thy servant,' 1st pers. sing. = I or me, Gen. xviii. 3; 1 Sam. xx. 7 f.; thy 'servants' = we, Gen. xlii. 11; Isa. xxxvi. 11. It is specially used in addressing a superior, as in prayer to God, so here and often: see verses 4, 16, lxxxix. 50, xc. 13, cii. 14, 28. See also on lxxviii. 70: cf. the English 'your obedient, humble, &c. servant.'

3. See lvii. 1 f.: cf. xxx. 8, 10.

Be merciful: rather, 'Be gracious,' 'show favour.'

4. See xc. 15, 'gladden us' (same Hebrew word as here): cf. li. 8 ('satisfy us'—based on corrected text—'with joy and gladness').

4^b is based on xxv. 1.

thy servant: see on verse 2.

5. See cxxx. 4, and Exod. xxxiv. 6 f. The latter seems to be the source used, though the words are changed.

6. See v. 2, lv. 1 f., xxviii. 2: cf. cxxx. 2.

supplications: *lit.* prayers for favour: a noun formed from the verb in verse 3.

7. See xvii. 6, lxxvii. 2, cxx. 1 f.

8–10. *Incomparableness of Jehovah.*

8. See Exod. xv. 11. The existence of heathen gods is

Neither *are there any works* like unto thy works.
All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship 9
before thee, O Lord;
And they shall glorify thy name.
For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: 10
Thou art God alone.
Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: 11
Unite my heart to fear thy name.
I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart; 12
And I will glorify thy name for evermore.
For great is thy mercy toward me; 13
And thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest pit.

---

assumed, though Jehovah is above them all, and in the end will alone be worshipped (verse 9).

9. See xxii. 27; and cf. Isa. xxiv. 15. Note the Messianic ring of the verse. In the good time of Jehovah He alone will be worshipped from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

10. See lxxii. 18, lxxvii. 13 f., lxxxiii. 18; Exod. xv. 11.

11–13. *Prayer for guidance.*

11. Unite my heart: i. e. make it one and undivided: see Jer. xxxii. 39. But we must read (changing but one consonant), 'Let my heart (= me) be joined to those who fear Thy name.' The LXX, Pesh., followed by many moderns, read 'Let my heart rejoice,' &c., a trivial change in the vowels of the verb: cf. Job iii. 6.

12. See ix. 1.

13. See lvii. 16, lvi. 13 (= cxvi. 8); Deut. xxxii. 22: cf. Sir. li. 6.

the lowest pit: see Deut. xxxii. 22: Heb. 'Sheol (which is) nder' or 'below.' Even if the adjective has the force of the superlative (= 'lowest'), as Klostermann and most moderns hold, he description applies to Sheol as a whole and not to a part of t, that part where the wicked are punished. Sheol is thought of as he opposite of the upper regions of light and life: see Job xi. 8; mos ix. 2. It is the place to which all departed spirits or ersonalities go, good and bad: it does not correspond to our ell, purgatory, or heaven. 'To deliver from Sheol' = to save rom death. The word and the ideas conveyed by it are taken ver from Semitic heathenism, though later Jewish eschatology ead other ideas into the word. See Introduction, p. 15 ff.

14 O God, the proud are risen up against me,
And the congregation of violent men have sought after my soul,
And have not set thee before them.
15 But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth.
16 O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me;
Give thy strength unto thy servant,
And save the son of thine handmaid.
17 Shew me a token for good;
That they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed,
Because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

87 A Psalm of the sons of Korah; a Song.
1 His foundation is in the holy mountains.

The words in verse 13 could hardly have been uttered by the community. The Psalm expresses individual experience.

14–17. *Prayer for protection against enemies.*

14. This verse is almost *verbatim* from liv. 3.

15. Taken *verbatim* from Exod. xxxiv. 6. God is very different from the Psalmist's insolent and bloodthirsty foes.

16. O turn, &c.: taken from xxv. 16.

have mercy: 'be gracious': 'show free unmerited favour' (as in verse 3).

thy servant: see cxvi. 16. A servant has some claim upon the consideration of his master: the Psalmist uses this argument to drive home his petition; see on verse 2.

the son of thine handmaid: a verbal variation of **servant** for the sake of the parallelism, and having the same meaning. 'A son of a female servant' means simply one belonging to the servant class: see on lxxix. 11. The fanciful ideas which Delitzsch and others have read into the words have no sound basis.

17. token: a sign: some visible, unmistakable sign of the Divine favour; see Ezra viii. 22; Neh. v. 19, xiii. 31; Jer. xxiv. 6.

That they which hate me, &c.: see xl. 3, vi. 10.

PSALM LXXXVII.

Theme. Zion the metropolis of Jehovah's kingdom.

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion 2
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

I. *Contents.* The Psalm has two main parts, each ending with 'selah,' followed by a concluding verse.

(1) Zion, Jehovah's favoured city (verses 1–3).

(2) Zion to be the metropolis of God's kingdom throughout the world. All nations to be incorporated into this kingdom (verses 4–6).

(3) The exultation in Jerusalem of those who love her (verse 7).

We appear to have here a Psalm of the scattered Jews, composed by one of themselves for use in their synagogues. Under the stress of Persian and Syrian persecutions large bodies of Jews had been forced to make their homes in far-off lands. From the time of Alexander the Great (d. B.C. 323), when the Jewish nation came into contact with Greek civilization, emigration of Jews into Egypt, Asia Minor, Babylon, Greece, &c., went on at a rapid rate. Were the Jews thus separated from Fatherland to be shut out from the Zion kingdom? Nay, that kingdom was to be extended so as to take in faithful Israelites of all lands. Those of them who had been born in the countries named were yet to be reckoned as born into the kingdom of God.

The resemblances in thought and in language between this Psalm and Isa. xl–lxvi seem to imply that the latter arose out of he same set of conditions.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm seems to be a product ither of the late Persian or of the Maccabean period. The arallelism presented by the Psalm to writings of the former onnect it with that period rather than with the age of the Iaccabees. Many, however, think that the subject of the Psalm ; the conversion of the Gentiles, and date it about B.C. 500, soon fter the return from Babylon.

1–3. *Zion Jehovah's favoured city.*

1. Render verses 1 f.: 'Jehovah's foundation is upon holy ountains: 2. Jehovah loves the gates of Zion more than all the ates of Jacob.'

His foundation: the Hebrew for 'His' is a corruption of hovah: no noun to which 'his' can refer has occurred. Jehovah's undation means that which He has laid the foundation of, i.e. e temple.

2. the gates of Zion: the word **gates** often stands for city: e cxxii. 2, &c.

the dwellings of Jacob: i.e. the foreign cities in which the ws of the Diaspora dwelt, Alexandria, Tyre, &c.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O city of God. [Selah
4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon as among them that know me:
Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia;
This one was born there.
5 Yea, of Zion it shall be said, This one and that one was born in her;
And the Most High himself shall establish her.
6 The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the peoples,
This one was born there. [Selah

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3. Changing the vowels of one word ('speaks' for 'are spoken') render: 'Glorious things does He speak concerning thee, O city of God.'

This rendering better introduces the oracle contained in verses 4-6.

4-6. *The oracle of Jehovah.*

The Jews of the Diaspora will be received and recognized as constituents of the kingdom whose centre is Zion.

4. The proper names in this verse represent the scattered Jews settled in the localities named. These are now recognized by Jehovah Himself as members of the theocracy.

Rahab: *lit.* 'haughtiness,' a name for Egypt here and in Isa. xxx. 7, a genuine Isaianic passage. Originally it was one of the names of the primaeval monster Tiamat whom Marduk conquered, changing Chaos to Kosmos, see on lxxiv. 13 f. and lxxxix. 10. The name has this last sense in Isa. li. 9 and Job ix. 13, xxvi. 12, see Gunkel, *Chaos*, &c. p. 38.

5. The present Hebrew text yields no suitable meaning. If with the LXX we insert the word 'mother,' and if, besides, we omit the initial letter of the first verb, which letter is very small and might well have been written in error for a copyist's blot, we obtain the following excellent sense: 'But each one calls Zion mother, and in it (Zion) was each one born.' So Wellhausen and Duhm. The accidental falling out of the word = 'mother' would be helped by the fact that the same (two) letters occur in the verb next to it.

This one and that one: Heb. 'each one' or 'every one.'

6. When Jehovah will make a register of His people He will say of each foreign-born faithful Jew—This one, though physically born in some far-off land, shall be reckoned as a Zion-born man, a heir of Jehovah's covenant blessing.

They that sing as well as they that dance *shall say*, 7
All my fountains are in thee.

A Song, a Psalm of the sons of Korah; for the Chief Musician; **88**
set to Mahalath Leannoth. Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD, the God of my salvation, 1

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7. The rejoicing of those who love Zion.

Render: 'But they sing as they dance:
All my springs are in thee.'

The text is, however, very uncertain.

The subject (**they**) of the verbs **sing** and **dance** is indefinite; there is singing in Jerusalem accompanied by dancing, and the theme of the singing is 'The sources of our joy are in thee'—(Zion), see Isa. xii. 3: cf. xxxvi. 9 f., lxxxiv. 6. Dancing was a part of worship, see xxvi. 6 and 2 Sam. vi. 16.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

Theme. The prayer of one in deep distress.

'The gloomiest of all the plaintive Psalms' (Delitzsch).

I. *Title.* In every other case the words 'For the chief musician' (see vol. i. p. 14) occupy the first place in the title. For this and other reasons the words that go before are to be rejected as mere repetition of the title to Ps. lxxxvii. Thirtle gets over the difficulty by attaching the rest of the title to the preceding Psalm. Ps. lxxxvii is then twice (beginning and end) described as 'a Psalm of the Korahites.'

Mahalath Leannoth: the name of the melody to which the Psalm was to be sung: cf. title of Ps. liii.

Heman the Ezrahite: see Introduction to Ps. lxxiii. *Asaph Psalms.* The term Ezrahite is, however, wrongly applied to Heman and also to Ethan (Ps. lxxxix).

II. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist describes his miserable condition: near to death: forsaken of friends (verses 1–9).

(2) He prays to be saved from death on the ground that the ead cannot praise Jehovah (verses 10–13).

(3) He makes a pathetic appeal to Jehovah. Why has He thdrawn His countenance, and thus allowed him to be overhelmed with terrors? (verses 14–18).

This Psalm has many noteworthy features. It is the saddest the Psalter, sadder even than Pss. vii, xxii, and xxxi, for in se three light does break in at the last.

t is an individual that suffers and speaks: make it a song of ael in Babylon, and the force of this song is gone. The long

I have cried day and night before thee:
2 Let my prayer enter into thy presence;
Incline thine ear unto my cry:
3 For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life draweth nigh unto Sheol.
4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit;
I am as a man that hath no help:
5 Cast off among the dead,

---

drawn wail of this Psalm vividly recalls Job's most touching complaints.

Olshausen, Cheyne (2), &c. hold that the close of the Psalm has been lost: it is this lost part which, say they, contained the hope and faith with which such Psalms close.

Hengstenberg and Kay would join this Psalm to the next, making one long Psalm of the two.

The suffering of the Psalmist was in the first instance physical, though that brought on feelings of despair, harder to bear than the physical pain.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The author lived at a time when God was thought to have forsaken the nation, for it is to this forsaking that he ascribes his own sickness. There were many periods in the nation's history in which this thought was uppermost, and it is impossible to point to any one and to say with any confidence, that is the period in which this Psalm was written.

1 f. *Prayer to be heard and helped.*

1. Render: 'Jehovah my God I cry (to thee) for help by day, (and) I cry by night before thee.'

The M. T. gives no admissible sense, but by making a very few trivial changes in the Hebrew we get good grammar and sense; see above translation.

the God of my salvation: no change in the Hebrew consonants is required to yield the meaning: '(Jehovah) my God I cry for help.'

3–9. *The Psalmist describes his distress.*

3. Sheol: see on lxxxvi. 13. It is not the grave that is meant, but the home of departed spirits.

4. help: better, 'strength.'

5. Render: 'My soul (=I myself) is among the dead, Like the slain in the grave Whom thou rememberest no more, Seeing they are cut off by thy hand.'

Cast off: Hebrew and versions have 'free' (as a slave who is

Like the slain that lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more;
And they are cut off from thy hand.
Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, 6
In dark places, in the deeps.
Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, 7
And thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. [Selah
Thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me; 8
Thou hast made me an abomination unto them:
I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.
Mine eye wasteth away by reason of affliction: 9
I have called daily upon thee, O LORD,
I have spread forth my hands unto thee.
Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? 10

---

set at liberty): the same Hebrew word has this sense in Job iii. 19: but in the latter it is a boon rejoiced in—in Sheol the slave is no longer tyrannized over. Here the condition described is one deplored. It is best to change one letter, and to render 'my soul': see above. Duhm reads 'Thou shuttest me up among the dead'—excellent in sense, but involving a greater change of text.

6. lowest pit: dark places: deeps: the Targ. takes these to be graphic pictures of the Exile in Babylon; see on lxxxvi. 13. For deeps' LXX, Pesh. have 'shadow of death' (= 'blackest gloom'); ee xxiii. 4. The Hebrew word is once more, through Nöldeke's nfluence, regarded as a compound = 'the shadow' or 'gloom of eath.'

7. Render: 'Thou hast laid thy fury upon me, And thou hast aused thy waves to come to meet me.'

lieth: the Hebrew verb is always elsewhere transitive. It better to make a slight change and to render as above.

afflicted: read as in the above rendering, changing similar tters in the Hebrew.

8. He is abandoned by his friends: cf. Job xix. 13 f.

abomination: in Hebrew 'abominations': probably the ural of intensity: 'a great abomination.'

9. Mine eye, &c.: the eye soonest of any member tells the tale sorrow; see vi. 7, xxxi. 9; Job xvii. 7.

10-13. *Prayer to be saved from death.*

That the shadowy denizens of Sheol can do nothing is the view

Shall they that are deceased arise and praise thee? [Selah
11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?
Or thy faithfulness in Destruction?
12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
13 But unto thee, O LORD, have I cried,
And in the morning shall my prayer come before thee.
14 LORD, why castest thou off my soul?
Why hidest thou thy face from me?
15 I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up:
While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.
16 Thy fierce wrath is gone over me;

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which meets us in later parts of the O. T.: see xciv. 17, cxv. 17; Job vii. 9, &c.: and also Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 41 ff. and 47 f.

The questions in verses 10-13 anticipate a negative answer.

10. Render: 'Canst thou perform wonders on behalf of the dead? Or can shades rise to praise thee?'

wonders: see on lxxviii. 4, where a cognate word occurs in the plural.

they that are deceased: better, 'shades': the word occurs in late Hebrew for the dead in Sheol: see Prov. ii. 18, &c.

arise: i. e. to praise, not return to life. 'Can these shades, as such, praise thee?'

11. Destruction: better retain the Hebrew word *Abaddon*, which is a synonym of *Sheol*; see Rev. ix. 11.

12. land of forgetfulness: the land where one forgets and is forgotten. The expression occurs only here; see Job xiv. 21.

13. Render: 'But as for me, unto thee, O Jehovah, cry I for help: Even in the morning does my prayer come to meet thee.'

in the morning: his first thoughts will be of thanks to God if only he is spared.

14-18. *Pathetic appeal to Jehovah. Why has He hidden His face?*

14. my soul: i. e. me (emphatic), see on lxxviii. 18.

15. Render: 'Afflicted am I and at the point of death' (*lit.* 'expiring') 'through pressure: I have borne thy terrors so that I am distracted.'

from my youth up: read, 'through pressure' (due to pain): the Hebrew words are easily confounded.

16. Thy fierce wrath: render: 'thy streams of wrath': the Hebrew word is plural; see xlii. 7.

Thy terrors have cut me off.
They came round about me like water all the day long ; 17
They compassed me about together.
Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, 18
And mine acquaintance into darkness.

89 Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever : 1

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18. And mine acquaintance into darkness: render: 'my acquaintances are darkness,' i. e. darkness takes the place of my friends. I lose the former and instead get the latter—a sorry exchange! see Job xvii. 14.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Theme. Prayer for a renewal of Jehovah's mercies.

I. *Title.* **Ethan the Ezrahite.** See on *Asaph Psalms*, pp. 37 f., and see also Introduction to Ps. lxxvii.

II. *Contents.* (1) Theme of the Psalm. The covenant made with David (2 Sam. vii) (verses 1–4).

(2) A song of praise to Jehovah the Creator and Governor of the world, the righteous and gracious God (verses 5–14).

(3) The privileges of Jehovah's people, happy and helped (verses 15–18).

(4) Fuller statement of the covenant made with David (see verses 1–4) (verses 19–37).

(5) Contrast between the ideal, as set forth in the covenant, and the actual state of the people (verses 38–45).

(6) Prayer that Jehovah may have regard to them, and that He may manifest to them the lovingkindness of past days (verses 46–51).

(7) Liturgical addition, closing Book III.

This Psalm stands in close connexion with Ps. cxxxii—see on hat Psalm (*Contents*). In both Jehovah is entreated on the ground f the covenant made with David to be gracious to His people : ut in the present Psalm there is unrelieved gloom : hope has one except the glimmering rays which come from the covenant. n Ps. cxxxii there is hope and even confidence, for God has egun to be gracious.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm must be post-exilic, as it based on the post-exilic piece 2 Sam. vii. 1–29. The expectation f the perpetual rule of the house of David did not arise in Israel ntil after the Exile, or at least until some time during the Exile.

With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to
all generations.
2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever;
Thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.
3 I have made a covenant with my chosen,

When the Southern kingdom had come to an end pious Israelites began to cast about as to the future of God's elect people. 2 Sam. vii. 1–29 formulates the hope by which the Jews sustained their faith in God and in their future. Literary and other considerations place it beyond doubt that 2 Sam. vii. 1–29 originated in post-exilic times (so the latest commentators), and this conclusion carries with it a post-exilic date for the present Psalm.

There were many periods of national distress after the return from Babylon which could serve as a background for this Psalm; note especially the Samaritan and the Syrian persecutions: but it is impossible to fix upon any one to the exclusion of the rest, though that has been largely done.

Many recent commentators (Olshausen, Bickell, &c.) hold that verses 1–18 (except perhaps 4 f.) is an independent poem, implying that the people are happy and prosperous, written perhaps by the same author (Bickell and Duhm) but at a different time. The reasons for this conclusion are purely subjective, and they are more than balanced by reasons in favour of the unity of the Psalm. There is in the whole a development and connectedness of thought which argue that it is one whole poem that we have here.

1–4. *The Covenant with David* (see 2 Sam. vii. 1–29).

1. mercies: kindnesses or kind acts. There is no implication of guilt in the word.

2. Render: 'For thou saidst, For ever shall kindness be built up: In the heavens shall my faithfulness be established.'

I have said: read with LXX, Pesh. 'Thou saidst.'

shall be built up: the verbs 'build' and 'establish' in this verse are suggested by their proper use in verse 4. God's loving-kindness is pictured as a building which becomes more and more manifest as stone is laid on stone.

shalt thou establish: rather with LXX, Sym., 'shall be established': no change of consonants is needed.

in the very heavens: *lit.* 'in the heavens—my faithfulness shall be established in them.' The thought is—in heaven far removed from the changes of the earth: cf. the 'hope . . . within the veil,' Heb. vi. 19: see cxix. 89. Or perhaps the meaning is 'with the stability and immutability of the heavens': see lxxii. 5, cxix. 90.

3 f. contain in brief the substance of the covenant made by

I have sworn unto David my servant;
Thy seed will I establish for ever, 4
And build up thy throne to all generations. [Selah
And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD; 5
Thy faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones.
For who in the skies can be compared unto the LORD? 6
Who among the sons of the mighty is like unto the LORD,
A God very terrible in the council of the holy ones, 7
And to be feared above all them that are round about him?
O LORD God of hosts, 8
Who is a mighty one, like unto thee, O JAH?

Jehovah with David (2 Sam. vii. 1–29). These verses depend on the 'thou saidst' of verse 3, for they give Jehovah's words. The language of 2 Sam. vii is closely followed.

3. sworn: in 2 Sam. vii nothing is said of an oath made by God, see cxxxii. 11.

my servant: see on lxxviii. 50 and lxxxvi. 2.

5–18. *A beautiful hymn of praise in which the attributes of Jehovah's character are celebrated.*

5. Render: 'So let the heavens' (i. e. heavenly beings) 'praise thy wonderful acts, O Jehovah; Yea, (let) the assembly of the holy ones (praise thy wonderful acts).'

6. who in the skies, &c.: which of the gods represented by the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, &c., is comparable to Jehovah?

sons of the mighty: i. e. false gods. The word rendered 'mighty' means in the plural invariably the gods of the heathen, see Exod. xv. 11, &c. Cf. xxix. 1, lxxxii. 1 (see on). For the force of 'sons of' see on lxxix. 11.

7. Render: 'A God to be dreaded in the council of the holy ones, Great and terrible above all those round about Him.'

very terrible: omit 'very': it is the adjective = 'great' written in error with the fem. ending. The LXX connects with the following, translating as above.

holy ones: as in verse 5 'angels,' so also **them that are round about him.** It is possible that the council of gods in which Jehovah was supposed to preside is meant here and in verse 5: the epithetic 'holy' (ones) would be then applied ironically: see Introduction to Ps. lxxxii.

8. JAH: in Hebrew 'Yah,' an abbreviated form of *Yahweh* (Jehovah), due perhaps in the first instance to the shortened writing of the scribes. Though appearing in early Hebrew poetry (Exod. xv. 2) it is a later form than *Yahweh*, and this fact, together

And thy faithfulness is round about thee.
9 Thou rulest the pride of the sea:
When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.
10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain;
Thou hast scattered thine enemies with the arm of thy strength.
11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine:
The world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.
12 The north and the south, thou hast created them:
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in thy name.
13 Thou hast a mighty arm:
Strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.
14 Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of thy throne:
Mercy and truth go before thy face.

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with the occurrence of the fuller form in the Moabite stone, is against the supposition of Fried. Delitzsch and Hommel that the shorter name is the original one, the longer name being due, they say, to a desire to connect this Divine name with the Hebrew verb 'to be' (*hawah* = *hayah*); see on civ. 35.

9. Thou: in Hebrew emphatic = 'As for thee, thou,' &c.

sea: a reference to the sea monster slain by the supreme God. See on **Rahab** in the next verse.

10. Rahab: i. e. the monster of the ancient Semitic creation-myth, not Egypt; see on lxxiv. 13 f. and on lxxxvii. 4.

11 f. describe how Jehovah, having overcome the great foe of light and order, called into being a *kosmos* or well-arranged universe.

11. The world: *lit.* 'the productive earth,' not, as used to be thought (cf. LXX), 'the inhabited world.' The Hebrew word is always anarthrous, as though it were a proper noun.

12. Tabor and Hermon: standing for east and west, from the point of view of one writing in South Palestine.

13. arm: hand: right hand: all terms expressive of God's power in action. The terms are often used in the account of the Exodus to indicate what God did (Exod. xv. 6, 9, 12, 16).

14. Jehovah's rule is not only powerful (verse 13), it is also just.

judgement = righteousness in action. God's throne is based on the quality and practice of righteousness.

Mercy and truth, &c.: render: 'lovingkindness and faith-

Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: 15
They walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.
In thy name do they rejoice all the day: 16
And in thy righteousness are they exalted.
For thou art the glory of their strength: 17
And in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.
For our shield belongeth unto the Lord; 18
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Then thou spakest in vision to thy saints, 19

---

fulness go before thee.' Wherever He is these qualities are: they are God's forerunners, His servants, His vassals; see xliii. 3, &c.

15–18. *The privileges of Jehovah's people.*

15. Blessed: i. e. 'happy': see on lxxxiv. 4.

joyful sound: the trumpet sound heard when the festivals were being celebrated; see lxxxi. 1.

in the light of thy countenance: i. e. in the enjoyment of thy favour; see iv. 6, and Num. vi. 25 f.

16. thy name=thy revealed character: so parallel to **thy righteousness.**

they rejoice: Heb. 'they exult.'

are they exalted: the Hebrew can hardly yield this translation. Better read, making unimportant changes in the Hebrew, 'they put forth ringing shouts of joy.' This is supported by parallelism.

17. the glory of their strength=the power in which they glory; see xliv. 6 ff.

And in thy favour, &c.: render: 'And through thy favour thou wilt exalt our horn.' This is the rendering backed by the uncorrected Hebrew text, the Targ., and Jero., and it falls in better with the context, where the second person is used concerning the exalting of the horn; see on lxxv. 4, and cf. verse 24.

18. shield: explained in the next clause to mean 'King'; see xxxiv. 10. 'Our King, who is our defender, is one appointed by Jehovah.' The Psalm comes back now to the covenant with David.

19–37. *Expansion of what is said in verses 1–4 concerning the covenant with David.* We have in these verses a poetical amplication of the prophecy uttered by Nathan (see 2 Sam. vii. 5–17).

19. Then, at the time spoken of in 2 Sam. vii. 1–29 referred to

And saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen out of the people.
20 I have found David my servant;
With my holy oil have I anointed him:
21 With whom my hand shall be established;
Mine arm also shall strengthen him.
22 The enemy shall not exact upon him;
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
23 And I will beat down his adversaries before him,
And smite them that hate him.
24 But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him;
And in my name shall his horn be exalted.
25 I will set his hand also on the sea,

---

in verses 1-4. See especially 2 Sam. vii. 8-16. This word at least seems to imply the intervention of verses 5-18.

thy saints: 'thy favoured ones,' see on lxxix. 2.

help: read 'crown' (*nezer* for *'ezer*); the M. T. makes no sense.

one chosen: better, 'a young warrior'—no change in the Hebrew; see Amos iv. 10, &c.

20. I have found: read, 'I have consecrated,' and see 1 Kings xiii. 13 for the phrase thus obtained.

(David) **my servant:** a title of respect: see on lxxviii. 70.

anointed: see 1 Sam. ix. 16, &c. Kings and priests were anointed for their office: see pp. 7 f.

21. my hand: Mine arm = 'my power': see on verse 13.

shall be established: shall be firmly fixed; shall not depart from him, i. e. my power will not fail him.

22. shall not exact upon him: i. e. shall not oppress him with the ruthless cruelty of a heartless creditor: so the LXX, the Rabbis, Calvin, Hupfeld, &c. Most moderns, however, derive from a verb with the same letters (one may be different), meaning 'to deceive': then 'to overtake unawares' (see lv. 16).

The second part of the verse is taken almost *verbatim* from 2 Sam. vii. 10; cf. 2 Sam. iii. 24.

the son of wickedness: better, 'the wicked man'; see on lxxix. 11.

23. beat down: Heb. 'cut in pieces.'

24. mercy: better, 'lovingkindness.'

25. sea = the Mediterranean, i. e. the west.

nd his right hand on the rivers.
e shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, 26
y God, and the rock of my salvation.
also will make him *my* firstborn, 27
he highest of the kings of the earth.
y mercy will I keep for him for evermore, 28
nd my covenant shall stand fast with him.
is seed also will I make to endure for ever, 29
nd his throne as the days of heaven.
f his children forsake my law, 30
nd walk not in my judgements;

---

rivers = the Euphrates and its canals, i. e. the east. These ere the recognized boundaries of the Holy Land: see lxxii. 8, &c.

26. In 2 Sam. vii. 14 Jehovah promises David to be a Father his son Solomon. Here He promises to be a Father to David imself. In Ps. ii the promise is applied to the relationship etween Jehovah and the Messiah.

My God, and the rock of my salvation: see xviii. 2; eut. xxxii. 15.

27. firstborn: i. e. chief among kings. Israel is also spoken of God's firstborn: see Exod. iv. 22, &c. Hitzig holds that 'David' this Psalm denotes the anointed nation.

The highest: of kings. The word is often applied to God: e lxxiii. 11, &c.

28–37. *Permanence of the covenant.* 2 Sam. vii. 13–16.

28. mercy: 'lovingkindness.'

29. seed = descendants who shall succeed him on the throne.

as the days of heaven: 'as long as the heaven endures,' . for ever. In its original place—Deut. xi. 21—the phrase is ed of Israel: another application to David of what was first d of the nation. For the phrase see lxxii. 5, 7, 17; Job xiv. 12.

30–34. An amplification of 2 Sam. vii. 14 f. When David's scendants on the throne prove unfaithful to God, even then will d be faithful to the covenant.

erses 30 f. constitute the protasis and 32 f. the apodosis of ong sentence.

0. his children: Heb. 'sons,' i. e. those of his descendants o shall succeed him as king.

judgements: rather, 'ordinances': see Introduction to Ps. , p. 254.

31 If they break my statutes,
And keep not my commandments;
32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
33 But my mercy will I not utterly take from him,
Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.
34 My covenant will I not break,
Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
35 Once have I sworn by my holiness;
I will not lie unto David;
36 His seed shall endure for ever,
And his throne as the sun before me.
37 It shall be established for ever as the moon,
And *as* the faithful witness in the sky. [Selah

38 But thou hast cast off and rejected,

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32. In 2 Sam. vii. 14 for **rod** and **stripes** we have 'the rod of men,' 'the stripes of men,' i. e. Jehovah will inflict such chastisement as earthly fathers do when their children go wrong. See Hos. vi. 7; Job xxxi. 33, &c.

33. mercy = 'lovingkindness.'

Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: Heb. 'Nor will I be false in my faithfulness.'

35. sworn: see on verse 3.

by my holiness: see lx. 6, Amos iv. 26; when God promises or makes an oath by His holiness it is implied that the certainty of execution is vouched for by His character.

36. his throne: the royal office, not the material object.

as the sun: in duration; see on verse 29.

37. Render: 'It' (=his throne, see 2 Sam. vii. 16) 'shall be made firm' (= 'lasting') 'as the moon for ever: and for ever as the sky shall it be sure.'

witness: read, 'for ever,' altering one vowel.

in the sky: better, 'as the sky': the particles for 'in' and 'as' are written almost exactly alike, and are constantly confounded as here.

38-45. *Contrast between the ideal held out in the covenant with David and the actual state of the people.*

38. But thou: read 'now' changing the first consonant into one closely resembling it.

Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.
Thou hast abhorred the covenant of thy servant: 39
Thou hast profaned his crown *even* to the ground.
Thou hast broken down all his hedges; 40
Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.
All that pass by the way spoil him: 41
He is become a reproach to his neighbours.
Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries; 42
Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.
Yea, thou turnest back the edge of his sword, 43
And hast not made him to stand in the battle.
Thou hast made his brightness to cease, 44
And cast his throne down to the ground.
The days of his youth hast thou shortened: 45
Thou hast covered him with shame. [Selah

---

39. abhorred: read, 'shaken off,' changing the middle con-
onant.

even **to the ground:** i.e. by casting it (the crown) to the
round. See on lxxiv. 7.

40. What is said in 40ª of the king is in lxxx. 12 said of the
ation. But in this Psalm the distinction between the king and
eople seems often a vanishing one.

41ᵇ is from lxxix. 4: cf. xliv. 13.

41. All that pass by the way: the hordes that invade the
untry or pass through it towards some other country—Syria or
gypt, &c.

43. thou turnest back, &c. The sense is: 'Thou dost not
ow his sword to slay one foe. When its edge is directed towards
e enemy thou makest it return without having wrought any
ecution.' The idea of blunting the edge is not in the Hebrew.
Perhaps with Targ., Graetz, &c. we should read, 'Thou turnest
ck his sword,' which yields the same sense and is simpler.

44. Render: 'Thou hast taken away the sceptre from his hand,'
. The changes in the Hebrew necessary for this are few and
important.

45. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: it is
ficult to make these words apply to David, for he died in a
od old age.

46 How long, O Lord, wilt thou hide thyself for ever?
How long shall thy wrath burn like fire?
47 O remember how short my time is:
For what vanity hast thou created all the children of men!
48 What man is he that shall live and not see death,
That shall deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? [Selah
49 Lord, where are thy former mercies,
Which thou swarest unto David in thy faithfulness?
50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants;
How I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the mighty peoples;

46–51. *The Psalmist pleads with Jehovah to put away His anger.*

46. This verse is almost *verbatim* as in lxxix. 5: render: 'How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou hide thyself? Will thy hot anger burn like fire for ever?'

47. Render: 'Remember, O Lord, what kind of thing (this) passing life is! For what vain purpose hast thou created human beings?'

The word 'Lord' has, by a copyist's negligence, been corrupted to the first personal pronoun 'I,' which here is untranslatable. The mistake is due to the dropping of one letter (*d*).

children of men: Heb. 'sons of men,' i.e. men, human beings; see on lxxix. 11.

48. Render: 'Who is the man that will live (on) without seeing (experiencing) death, That shall deliver himself from the power of Sheol?'

Sheol: see on lxxxvi. 13.

49. former mercies: rather, 'former lovingkindnesses' (as in A. V.).

Which thou swarest: see on verse 3.

50 f. Jehovah is Himself dishonoured by the continuance of Israel's disasters.

50. Render: 'Remember, O Lord, the reproach of' (= 'hurled against') 'thy servant: How I bear' (lit. 'my bearing') 'in my bosom the contumely of the peoples.'

servants: read 'servant' (sing.).

***the reproach of* all the mighty peoples:** the italicized words are not in the Hebrew. The remaining Hebrew words have consonants greatly resembling those of the Hebrew word for 'contumely' (*Kelimma*), and we must no doubt restore this word as original.

Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, 51
Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine
anointed.

Blessed be the Lord for evermore. 52
Amen, and Amen.

BOOK IV.

A Prayer of Moses the man of God. **90**

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place 1

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51. footsteps: they follow him, are at his heels with taunts and gibes as to his God and his religion. Cf. xvii. 11; Jer. xii. 6 (R. V.).

52. This verse is not a part of the Psalm, but a closing doxology o Book III (73-89) added by one of the editors of the present ollection.

Books IV and V.

The Psalms in these two books (xc-cvi and cvii-cl) formed riginally one collection, as is true of those in Books II and III, hough the evidence in the latter case is more abundant and con- incing. The doxology at the end of Ps. cvi was added from Chron. xvi. 36 after the division into five books had taken lace. Pss. cv-vii are so allied in form and thought that they must rom the first have stood together. It was no doubt the arrange- ent of the national law book into 'five-fifths' that led to a orresponding division of the national hymn-book. Moreover, ere are Elohistic and Yahwistic Psalms as there are Elohistic d Yahwistic parts of the Pentateuch.

In the sixty-one Psalms of these books 'Yahweh' occurs thirty- ree times, 'Elohim' seven times. Of the latter, six are in Ps. iii (see on), which is made up of extracts from two Elohistic salms and an editorial introduction. The other Psalm in these oks in which 'Elohim' is found (cxliv) is also composite.

There are some common features in Pss. xc-cl which suggest at they formed at one time a single collection, such as the ge number of 'orphan' (i. e. titleless) and liturgical Psalms, the scellaneous character of the Psalms, &c.: see the larger com- ntaries.

The following are the principal groups in Books IV and V.

(1) The David Psalms—fifteen in number (all in Book V).

In all generations.
2 Before the mountains were brought forth,

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(2) The 'Songs of the Going up' ('Song of degrees'). Pss. cxx–cxxxiv.

(3) The Theocratic Psalms xciii–c (except xciv).

(4) The 'Hodu' (= 'O give thanks') Psalms, cv–vii and cxxxvi.

(5) The Hallelujah Psalms. See *Hallelujah Psalms*, p. 226 f.

PSALM XC.

Theme. Jehovah the unchanging, the refuge of changing and erring man.

I. *Title.* The name **Moses** appears in the title probably on account of the similarity between the teaching of the Psalm and that of portions of the Pentateuch, the latter being the work of Moses according to Jewish tradition.

II. *Contents.* (1) The eternity of God contrasted with the frailty and brevity of human life (verses 1–6).

(2) The sorrow of man's short life due to God's anger, which is itself due to man's sin (verses 7–10).

(3) Prayer for wisdom to realize the brevity of life, and for Divine satisfaction (verses 11–17).

III. *Authorship and Date.* The resemblances between this Psalm and Deut. xxxii make it likely that they are contemporary or nearly so. Perhaps the dashing to the ground of the hopes of the nation in B. C. 609 by the death of good king Josiah was the immediate occasion that called forth the Psalm. Dillmann (in class) held that the Psalm arose in the Northern kingdom in the reign of Ahab, when Ben-hadad invested Samaria (about B. C. 857), see 1 Kings xx; but the Deuteronomic teaching of the Psalm excludes this hypothesis, as also Ewald's similar view. Later dates (Maccabean, &c.) have been defended by Hitzig and others.

Notwithstanding the attacks upon the unity of the Psalm made by many recent critics the Psalm itself stands well together, and has no clear traces of being composite. Of course the connectedness of the thought may be due to good editing: Gunkel and others deny this connectedness.

1–6. *God's eternity and man's evanescence contrasted.*

Verses 1–12 constitute an independent poem according to Duhm.

1. Lord: the Hebrew word used here (*adonai*) is that which the Jews read instead of Jehovah (*Yahweh*): the vowels of this word have been inserted in the form represented by 'Jehovah.'

dwelling place: so Pesh., Jero. The same Hebrew word

Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
Thou turnest man to destruction; 3
And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
For a thousand years in thy sight 4
Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.
Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as 5
a sleep:

---

occurs in lxxi. 3, xci. 9. The LXX, altering the last letter to one much like it, reads 'refuge': so Wellhausen, &c.

2. Render: 'Before the mountains were begotten (born), or earth and fruit-bearing world were brought forth' (with birth pains); 'Yea from eternity' (in the past) 'to eternity' (in the future) 'thou art God.'

thou hadst formed: render: 'were brought forth,' see above: only one vowel in the Hebrew need be changed: so the Greek versions and Targ. On the other hand, Pesh., Jero. have the active, as M.T.

3. Render: 'Thou makest man return to dust-particles: Then thou sayest come back, O ye men (human beings).'

man: the Hebrew word (= Latin *vir*) is that used in viii. 4^a, and commonly explained, even now, as 'man in his weakness,' see on cxiii. 15. But it cannot be too much insisted upon that in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry pairs of words like the two Hebrew words for 'man' are treated as synonyms, though in other connexions they have significant differences of sense.

4. when it is past: so translate, not as R.Vm. 'when it passeth.' A small letter (*yod*) has been, by error, written twice, and so the erb has assumed the verb of an imperf. or present.

The **it** refers to the (term of) 1,000 years. 'Yesterday' is lways past.

a watch: at this time there were three watches in the night: in our Lord's day and for some time before there were four. See in cxix. 148. What passes more quickly or more imperceptibly han a night watch, when people are wrapt in sleep!

When a thousand years have glided by, to God it seems no longer an one day. Man's days, though few, are so full of trouble that ey seem very long. With God time does not count.

5. Render: 'Thou sowest them year by year: they are like routing grass.' We must, no doubt, read 'thou sowest' for **thou rriest**: the Hebrew for the former could easily be mistaken

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
7 For we are consumed in thine anger,
And in thy wrath are we troubled.
8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath:
We bring our years to an end as a tale *that is told.*
10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten,

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for that in the M. T., as a glance at the original will show: see lxxvii. 18.

In the morning: these words were dittographed by mistake from the next verse and must be omitted here.

6. Render: 'In the morning it (the grass) blossoms and sprouts: in the evening it is mown down and withers.'

groweth up: the Hebrew means 'to glide by,' 'to pass away.' Ewald maintains that it is the change of decay that is here meant; but that sense does not suit the verb in verse 5: in both verses it is best to explain the verb as meaning 'to move upward'; then 'to grow.'

7-10. *Man's sorrow due to God's anger, the cause of God's anger being man's sin.*

7. we are consumed: Heb. 'come to an end.'

troubled: the element of fear lies in the word: 'we are dismayed' preserves that element.

The 'we' and the 'our' of this Psalm refer to the nation. This Psalm had apparently a liturgical origin.

8. sins: read 'sin' with most authorities.

in the light, &c.: in iv. 6, lxxxix. 15 (see on) the light of God's face is His bright smile and His favour: in this verse it is the light (*lit.* here 'luminary') which reveals sins otherwise unknown.

9. Render: 'For all our days decline' (towards evening): 'In consequence of thy wrath we come to an end: Our years are as a sigh' (so quick in passing).

We bring our years, &c.: read (with LXX, &c.) as above, altering the Hebrew vowels.

as a tale *that is told*: Heb. 'as a sigh.'

The LXX renders: 'Our years have gone on performing their tasks like a spider.'

10. Render: 'The day of our years, their high point is seventy years, And if we have much strength eighty years; Yet their

Or even by reason of strength fourscore years;
Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow;
For it is soon gone, and we fly away.
Who knoweth the power of thine anger, 11
And thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto thee?
So teach us to number our days, 12
That we may get us an heart of wisdom.
Return, O Lord; how long? 13
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
O satisfy us in the morning with thy mercy; 14
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

(whole) extent is weariness and trouble: Surely it passes quickly away and we take our flight' (hence).

The average age of men is by no means seventy years. Besides, he Hebrew construction in 10^c is peculiar, and suggests corruption. We should, with Duhm, make a small change in the Hebrew and ender as above.

their pride: read, 'their extent,' altering one letter for nother much like it: see on cxxxviii. 3.

11–17. *Sundry petitions.*

11 f. Prayer for wisdom to see and recognize Jehovah's anger nd the consequent brevity of life.

11. power (of thine anger): i. e. 'extent,' as Latin *vis*, and Welsh *wr.* So in provincial Welsh-English one hears of a 'power of ood,' 'a power of men.'

the fear that is due unto thee: rather, 'thy power to vaken fear.'

12. So: i. e. as thy wrath demands.

That we may get us: that we may bring (to the consideration things) a wise intellect.

13–17. *Prayer for a restoration of the Divine favour so that the ple may be gladdened.*

13. Return: better, 'make a turn,' 'a change'; see vi. 4. The ef and elliptical **how long** is very expressive.

let it repent thee, &c.: rather, 'be compassionate towards,' . The Hebrew construction for 'to repent' is different. With cf. Deut. xxxii. 36.

4. in the morning: i. e. 'quickly,' 'soon.'

rejoice: Heb. 'give forth ringing shouts of joy.'

15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast
afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.
16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory upon their children.
17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us:
And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

91 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High

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15. Let us have as much gladness in the future as we have had sadness in the past.

16. thy work: rather here, 'thy working' or 'doing.'

17. Render: 'May the favour of the Lord be upon us: Establish thou the work of our hands: Yea the work of our hands establish thou it.'

beauty: better, 'favour,' 'goodwill.'

the LORD should be printed 'Lord.' *Yahweh* (Jehovah) is not in the original.

The second **upon us** is a dittograph, and must go out. Its absence is required by rhythm and sense.

If nothing special is referred to in this verse the meaning is: 'Let our daily tasks prosper.'

PSALM XCI.

Theme. Jehovah the Protector of all them that put their trust in Him.

I. *Contents.* (1) The happiness of those who make Jehovah their refuge (verses 1 f.).

(2) Reasons for this happiness: Jehovah will protect them against evils of every kind (verses 3–13).

(3) Jehovah's promise to defend and deliver those who trust in Him (verses 14–16).

Psalms 90 f. are closely allied in language and thought, both of them having many affinities with Deut. xxxii. Perhaps the two Psalms are by the same author, and were intended to supplement each other, Ps. xci expressing the realization of the prayer with which Ps. xc closes.

The apparent change of person in verses 2 and 9 has led many to regard the Psalm as antiphonal. But the alleged change of person is due to textual corruption: see on verses 2, 9.

Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress; 2
My God, in whom I trust.
For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, 3
And from the noisome pestilence.
He shall cover thee with his pinions, 4

III. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of the Psalm on Deut. xxxii shows that it was not composed before B. C. 621. The doctrine of angels put forth in verses 11 f. makes a post-exilic date likely.

Verses 1 f. The happiness of those who make Jehovah their refuge.

1. Render: 'Happy is the man who dwells in the hiding place of the Most High, Who abides in the shadow of the Almighty.'

The word 'happy' has almost certainly dropped out from the beginning of the verse, its resemblance to the next word (in Hebrew) leading to this. Without it the Hebrew is peculiar.

Almighty: Heb. *Shaddai*, a word of uncertain meaning: see vol. i. p. 359.

2. Render: 'Say concerning Jehovah: (He is) my refuge and my fastness, My God in whom I trust.'

I will say: read 'say,' changing the vowels.

3–13. *Reasons for the happiness of those who trust Jehovah.* In 3–6 there is an enumeration of the evils to which the godly man is exposed.

3. shall deliver: render, 'delivers.' In verses 3 f. the verbs should probably be construed as presents. The Hebrew impf. used here is the tense (so called) of unfinished action.

snare of the fowler: the same figure is found in cxxiv. 7; cxli. 9; Hos. ix. 8. When the righteous man has fallen into the hands of insidious foes Jehovah rescues him.

noisome pestilence: 'noisome' in Old English (from Lat. *nocēre*) means 'noxious.' But it is better to read 'ruinous word,' .e. calumny, slander. So LXX, Sym. and (essentially) Pesh.: it is only a difference of Hebrew vowels. **The snare of the fowler** will then refer to plots to entrap him into compromising speech.

4. Translate the verbs as presents: see on verse 3.

pinions (parts of wings): **wings:** note that God is here pictured as having wings, with which He protects His people, as he bird its young. In Solomon's temple two winged cherubs vershadowed the ark. Cherubs and winged bulls play a rominent part in Semitic mythology. The well-known winged

And under his wings shalt thou take refuge:
His truth is a shield and a buckler.
5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
6 For the pestilence that walketh in darkness,
Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
7 A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.

---

bull with a human head is called in Assyrian *Kiribu*, in Heb. *Kerub*, the same word in both cases: see on lxxx. 1, and on xcix. 1.

The last part of verse 4 is placed by Duhm at the close of verse 7, where it is much more suitable.

His truth: rather, 'His faithfulness.'

5. Render: 'Thou needest not be afraid of any terrible thing at night, Nor of any arrow that may happen to fly in the day' (time).

terror: Heb. 'an object of fear': 'something that awakens fear.'

6. Render: ('Thou needest not be afraid') 'of any pestilence that may stalk (walk) about in darkness: (nor) of destruction, nor of the demon of noonday.'

pestilence: disease is represented as a living being hovering about and attacking human beings. There is an implied reference to the belief of the Semites that every disease was due to the action of some evil spirit—a demon; and that the way to cure the malady was to expel the demon. See *Magic, Divination, and Demonology among the Hebrews*, &c., by the present writer, p. 102 f.

in darkness: it was at night that evil spirits were supposed to do their work: see Exod. xi. 45; Isa. xxxvii. 36.

that wasteth, &c.: read, 'nor of the demon of noonday,' making very slight changes. The M. T. is neither grammatical nor sensible. Late Jewish writings recognized the existence of morning, noonday, and night demons.

7. Render: 'Though a thousand (men) should fall at thy side, And ten thousand at thy right hand, It shall not come near to thee.' ('His faithfulness is thy shield and wall of defence.')

The last clause of verse 4 belongs here probably. The verse supposes a case, but in Hebrew a conditional clause has often no particle accompanying it, so that our translators frequently, as here,

Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, 8
And see the reward of the wicked.
For thou, O Lord, art my refuge! 9
Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee, 10
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent.
For he shall give his angels charge over thee, 11
To keep thee in all thy ways.
They shall bear thee up in their hands, 12
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: 13

---

miss the sense of the O. T. author. 'Thou art as safe as Israel was when the destroying angel wrought such havoc among the Egyptians' (Exod. xii. 23).

8. Only: the word belongs to the whole sentence, not merely to 'eyes': cf. with this verse Deut. xxxii. 35, 41.

9. Render: 'For Jehovah is thine own refuge, The Lofty One thy place of safety.'

For thou: in Hebrew idiom the personal pronoun has frequently no other effect than to lay stress on an oblique form of the pronoun. Here it emphasizes 'thy' in 'thy refuge,' which must be read (with Wellhausen, &c.) for '*my* refuge'; cf. '*thy* habitation' in 9^b.

habitation: read 'refuge' as in xc. 1; so LXX.

10. plague: the Hebrew word is specially used of a Divine nfliction for sin, leprosy, &c.

11 f. The reference to angels in these verses shows the Psalm s of late date.

11. The Rabbis saw in this verse an allusion to the two inistering angels which every man was supposed to have. But n the O. T. such angels belong to nations, not individuals. For lustration of this verse see Tobit, Dan. iii, and cf. Ps. xxxiv. ; Gen. xxiv. 7, 40; Exod. xxiii. 20.

in all thy ways: in all the ways ordered for thee, not in ays of thy own choosing: see Matt. iv. 6; Luke iv. 10.

12. hands: cf. Exod. xix. 4: Heb. 'palms of thy hands.'

13. lion: read, 'asp': so LXX, Pesh. The Hebrew differs in e only of three consonants. Cf. **adder**; one would hardly speak treading on a 'lion.'

adder: same word in lviii. 4. It is the Egyptian cobra that meant, the reptile by which Cleopatra took her own life. The ord is found also in Deut. xxxii. 33; Job xx. 14; Isa. xi. 8.

The young lion and the serpent shalt thou trample under feet.
14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him:
I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.
15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble:
I will deliver him, and honour him.
16 With long life will I satisfy him,
And shew him my salvation.

92 A Psalm, a Song for the sabbath day.

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,

14–16. *Jehovah's promise to His people. The speaker is no longer the Psalmist, but Jehovah.*

14. set his love upon me: *lit.* 'clung affectionately to me': see Deut. ix. 7, x. 15.

(set him) on high: i. e. beyond the reach of his foes; cf. xx. 1.

known my name: i. e. known the name by which God was to be called upon in prayer: so = 'known how to seek me in prayer.' In later times the name *Yahweh* (Jehovah) acquired a mystical signification, a supposed source of magic power to those who knew it: but that time was not yet.

15 f. Cf. l. 15, 23; verse 15 resembles l. 15 closely.

15. Render: 'When he calls upon me I will answer him. I will be with him in distress: I will deliver him and honour him.' The first clause is conditional, though lacking the conditional particle: see on verse 7.

16. With long life: Heb. 'with length of life': Deut. xxx. 20; Prov. iii. 2, 16. This is the reward promised, not a future haven and heaven of joy: see Exod. xx. 12, xxiii. 26. The wicked, on the other hand, will be cut off: see verses 7 f.

will I satisfy him: cf. xc. 14: i. e. 'let him live as long as he finds life worth living.' In Gen. xxxv. 29, &c. it is said of those who had lived to a good old age that they died 'satisfied' in days.

Psalm XCII.

Psalms xcii–c are liturgical, and were probably composed for temple purposes. According to the Targum and Talmud Psalm

And to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:
To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, 2
And thy faithfulness every night,
With an instrument of ten strings, and with the psaltery; 3

---

xcii was composed for use on the sabbath, the Psalms for the other days being, according to the Talmud, as follows (beginning with Monday): xxiv, xlviii, lxxii, xciv, lxxxi, xciii. In style and matter Psalms xciii and xcv are closely allied, and, except for liturgical considerations, would not have been separated by Psalm xciv which is later in date and different in character.

Theme. A hymn of praise to Jehovah on account of what He has done.

I. *Title.* This Psalm was prescribed to be sung on the sabbath because the works of God in creation are supposed to be celebrated on that day: see verses 4 f.

II. *Contents.* (1) The duty of praising Jehovah on account of what He has done (verses 1–6).

(2) The ultimate ruin of the wicked (verses 7–11).

(3) The final triumph of the righteous (verses 12–15).

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm, as also the so-called 'Royal Psalms' xciii–c (except xciv), was elicited by some great deliverance, either that from Babylon, or one of the deliverances accorded the Jews during their struggle with Syria.

It is better, on the whole, to connect this series of Psalms, as the Cheyne of the Bampton Lectures does, with the period immediately following the return from Babylon. Jehovah had given proof of His sovereign power and of His love to His people by restoring them to their own land, and enabling them in part to rebuild both sanctuary and city.

1–6. *Jehovah should be praised for what He has done.*

1. good: 'proper,' 'right,' in the ethical sense: or it has the same meaning as 'comely' in xxxiii. 1, i.e. 'becoming.' The word may mean 'well-pleasing to God': cf. Gen. xxix. 18.

sing praises: *lit.* 'sing psalms,' the original noun for Psalm being cognate with the verb here.

2. The **morning** and **night** embrace here the whole day of twenty-four hours: see lv. 17, cxxvii. 2; Isa. v. 11; though in that case the words are hyperbolical. The distribution of the theme of the praise (**lovingkindness** and **faithfulness**) is poetical, not logical—due to the parallelism.

3. With an instrument of ten strings, and with the psaltery: render, 'with a ten-stringed instrument, even with harp': one instrument only is intended.

With a solemn sound upon the harp.
4 For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work:
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
5 How great are thy works, O Lord!
Thy thoughts are very deep.
6 A brutish man knoweth not;
Neither doth a fool understand this:
7 When the wicked spring as the grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;
It is that they shall be destroyed for ever:
8 But thou, O Lord, art on high for evermore.
9 For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord,
For, lo, thine enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

---

harp: render, 'lyre'; and on the two instruments here named see Introduction.

4. **thy work**: 'thy working' is what is meant by this word, the main emphasis being on the act.

I will triumph: Heb. 'I will put forth ringing shouts of joy.'

works: the Hebrew word here has a different root from that rendered **work**: here the stress is on the *result*, not on the process. The reference seems to be to some recent act of judgement and deliverance, and not to God's creating and governing the world.

5. **works**: as in verse 4.

thoughts: God's ulterior purpose in permitting the wicked to have, temporarily, the better lot.

6. **A brutish man**: see lxxiii. 22.

fool: the Hebrew word means 'silly,' 'childish.' The word rendered 'fool' in liii. 1 has usually an ethical colouring (wicked).

this: i. e. what is said in the next verse.

7–11. *The downfall of the wicked.*

7. **It is that they shall be destroyed**: better, 'that they may be destroyed.'

8. This one-lined verse is probably an interpolation: it interrupts the connexion of verses 7 and 9.

9. **For, lo—For, lo**: the repetition is for emphasis (see xciii. 3), but it helps the rhythm also.

But my horn hast thou exalted like *the horn of* the wild-ox : 10
I am anointed with fresh oil.
Mine eye also hath seen *my desire* on mine enemies, 11
Mine ears have heard *my desire* of the evil-doers that rise up against me.
The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree : 12
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

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10. Render : 'But thou hast exalted my horn as (that of) a wild ox : Thou hast anointed me with fresh oil.'

my horn hast thou exalted : see (for this symbolical expression) on lxxv. 4.

wild-ox : according to LXX, Jero., P.B.V., A.V., Wortabet (*DB.* ii. pp. 415 f.), and others, it is the unicorn that is meant. Though, however, one horn is here spoken of, the animal has two horns according to Deut. xxxiii. 17 : cf. Ps. xxii. 1. The description given in the O.T. makes it highly probable that the Hebrew word has the same meaning as the cognate Assyrian (*rimu*), viz. the wild ox, which is depicted on Assyrian monuments, and relics of which have been discovered in the bone-caves of Mount Lebanon.

I am anointed, &c. : read, 'thou hast anointed me,' &c. The verb is not that usually employed of anointing to office (the root in 'Messiah'), and it means elsewhere 'to mix.'

fresh oil : oil was used on festive and other occasions, as a means of restoring the spirits, and the fresher the oil the more ffective. See xxiii. 5, xlv. 7 ; Isa. lxi. 3.

11. Render : 'My eye has gazed with glee upon my watchful oes : My ears have listened with joy to (the wails of) [those who ave risen against me] evil-doers.'

The words in square brackets are a gloss on the word 'evil-oers,' and do not belong to the original text as the rhythm and wkwardness of construction suggest.

12–15. *The prosperity of the righteous* ; cf. lii. 8 f. Righteousess pays even here and now. This is also the thought of Psalm and of the O. T. generally. Of any reward hereafter not a llable is uttered here or in Ps. i.

12. like the palm tree : no tree in the East grows more entifully or more beautifully than the palm-tree. Here and in ant. vii. 7 it is used as a symbol of beauty.

like a cedar : a symbol of strength : see 2 Kings xiv. 9, x. 23.

13 They that are planted in the house of the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;
They shall be full of sap and green:
15 To shew that the LORD is upright;
He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

93 The LORD reigneth; he is apparelled with majesty;

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14. fruit in old age: the palm-tree has been known to reach a height of ninety feet, and an age of 200 years (Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. 286).

14[a] refers to the palm-tree, and 14[b] (**full of sap**, &c.) to the olive-tree: cf. Judges ix. 9.

15. See Deut. xxxii. 4.

my rock: LXX 'my God,' see on lxxv. 5, and on lxxviii. 35; Pesh. 'strong': Targ., Jero. 'my strength.'

ROYAL PSALMS.

Psalms xciii to c (except xciv) have been called 'Royal,' 'Theocratic,' and 'Eschatological-Jehovistic Psalms.' The prevailing note that sounds through all of them is that Jehovah reigns, or has begun to assert His rule. This series of Psalms is not to be confounded with Psalms also called 'Royal,' in which the praises of an earthly king are celebrated, as in Psalms xx f., xlv, lxi, lxiii, lxxii, &c. Psalms xciii to c (except xciv), together with Psalms xlvii and lxxxvii, which belong to the same class, are Messianic in the confidence with regard to the future which they express: see Introduction, pp. 9 ff.

PSALM XCIII.

Theme. Jehovah has become king.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah has asserted His eternal kingship (verses 1 f.).

(2) His victory over all foes (verses 3 f.).

(3) The inviolability of His laws (verses 5 f.).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See on Authorship and Date of Psalm xcii.

1 f. *Jehovah is King.*

1. The LORD reigneth: render, 'Jehovah is become King' or 'has begun His reign.' We have here an example of what is called in Hebrew Grammar the 'Inceptive Perf.,' corresponding to the 'Inceptive Aorist' in Greek: see 2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 Kings i. 11, &c.

The Lord is apparelled, he hath girded himself with strength:
The world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.
Thy throne is established of old: 2
Thou art from everlasting.
The floods have lifted up, O Lord, 3
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
Above the voices of many waters, 4
The mighty breakers of the sea,
The Lord on high is mighty.
Thy testimonies are very sure: 5
Holiness becometh thine house,
O Lord, for evermore.

O Lord, thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, 94

The world also is stablished: better render with LXX, Pesh: 'Yea, He has established the world.' Jehovah is the subject throughout the verse.

2. Of right Jehovah has always been King.

3 f. *Jehovah's victory over His foes.*

The language of these verses seems suggested by the Babyonian Tiamat-myth: see on lxxiv. 13 f., and on lxxxix. 10 f. But he immediate reference is to Egypt and Assyria, who had lifted hemselves up against Jehovah, as did the primaeval waters when He would create a *Kosmos* out of *Chaos*.

3. The floods: the Hebrew word is that commonly used for rivers.

4. Render: 'More glorious than the voices of many waters; More glorious than the waves (breakers) of the sea, Is Jehovah n high.' The above rendering assumes some slight changes in he M. T., but none in the consonants. The double occurrence of 'glorious' is quite in the manner of the Royal Psalms ('anadiplosis'). ee on cxxx. 12.

5. The inviolability of Jehovah's laws.

testimonies: Heb. 'admonitions,' 'commands,' as in Ps. 119.

sure: firm, unalterable as God Himself (Jas. i. 17).

Holiness: here = 'inviolability,' 'unchangeableness.'

Psalm XCIV.

Theme. Prayer for vengeance upon wrongdoers. The happiss of God's people.

Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth.
2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth:
Render to the proud *their* desert.
3 LORD, how long shall the wicked,
How long shall the wicked triumph?
4 They prate, they speak arrogantly:
All the workers of iniquity boast themselves.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer to Jehovah that He may take vengeance upon unjust rulers (verses 1–7).

(2) These rulers are rebuked for their folly in denying that Jehovah takes cognizance of their conduct (verses 8–11).

(3) The happiness of those who await patiently the final issue of things (verses 12–15).

(4) The Psalmist's realization of safety in Jehovah will sustain him and confound his foes (verses 16–23).

II. *Authorship and Date.* Psalms xciv and cxxxix seem to show dependence on Job, and the former on Psalm lxxiii (cf. verses 2–4, 16) as well. It is the problem of suffering that is dealt with in the three Psalms named and also in Job, as well as in Pss. xxxvii and xlix. In Psalm lxxiii the solution of the problem lies in the more than overbalancing joy of fellowship with God: in the present Psalm it comes from the conviction that God rules and overrules. The latter solution is more objective and more characteristic of a later time. That the Psalm is late may be also inferred from its almost certain dependence on Job and on Psalm lxxiii: but what definite period in the nation's history gave rise to the Psalm cannot be ascertained.

1–7. *Appeal to Jehovah to punish the unjust rulers.*

1. Render: 'O God of great vengeance! O Jehovah!'
'O God of great vengeance!'

vengeance: Heb. pl. of intensity, 'great or much vengeance.' 'God of great vengeance' = 'God who avenges much': see on cix. 4.

shine forth: in l. 2 and lxxx. 1 as here of a theophany.

2–4 seem dependent on lxxiii. 6-9. The wicked are described in both places in a very similar way.

2. Lift up thyself: in judicial majesty: see vii. 6. Get thyself up—upon thy throne.

3. triumph: Heb. 'exult': 'dance with joy.'

In verses 4–7 those people are described on whom vengeance is called.

4. Render: 'They belch out, they speak arrogant (words): they play at loud talk.'

They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, 5
And afflict thine heritage.
They slay the widow and the stranger, 6
And murder the fatherless.
And they say, The Lord shall not see, 7
Neither shall the God of Jacob consider.
Consider, ye brutish among the people: 8
And ye fools, when will ye be wise?
He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? 9
He that formed the eye, shall he not see?
He that chastiseth the nations, shall not he correct, 10

In 5 f. the Psalmist brings against the ruling class the same charges that the prophets often made.

5. break in pieces: 'crush,' as in Isa. iii. 15; Prov. xxii. 22: i. e. by extortionate and violent dealings.

heritage: see xxviii. 9; Deut. iv. 20.

6. They exercise their cruelty upon those who cannot defend themselves—widows, sojourners and orphans.

stranger: see on cxix. 19.

7. The LORD: Heb. *Jah*: see on lxxxviii. 8.

8–11. *The folly of the ruling class rebuked.*

8. Render: 'Consider ye, that act as brutes among the people, And ye dullards, when will ye get to understand?'

brutish: the Hebrew word is a participle, the verb being denominative from the noun for brute, beast of the field or forest. Translate as above.

among the people: the word for 'people' (*'am*) is the one sed generally for 'Israel.' To act brutishly among them was an ggravation of their guilt.

9. The argument is—He who gave others the power to hear nd see can surely Himself hear and see. J. Stuart Mill said that is verse contains the strongest argument for the existence of God.

10. Just as verse 9 contains an illustration from men's physical rganism, so in the present verse we have one supplied by God's oral government of the world.

chastiseth: better as R. V. marg., 'instructeth.'

nations: the regular word for heathen peoples. The argu-ent is: 'He who instructs the heathen (by chastening them), all he not correct (by chastisement) wrongdoers among His vn people?' Jehovah instructs even the heathen, and according the measure of that instruction will they be judged. See Rom. 20, ii. 14 f.

Even he that teacheth man knowledge?
11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man,
That they are vanity.
12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD,
And teachest out of thy law;
13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity,
Until the pit be digged for the wicked.
14 For the LORD will not cast off his people,
Neither will he forsake his inheritance.
15 For judgement shall return unto righteousness:
And all the upright in heart shall follow it.

***Even* he that teacheth man knowledge:** read, 'He that teaches man, has He not knowledge (or knows He not)?' This is supported by rhythm and sense.

11. This verse answers the question restored at the end of the foregoing verse, 'Does not God know?' verse 11, 'Yea, Jehovah knows,' &c.

thoughts: that they can sin on with impunity.

That they: i. e. the thoughts.

vanity: Heb. 'a breath.'

Duhm omits verse 11 as a gloss on verses 9 f., as it has neither poetical form nor suitable connexion. As to the latter see above.

12–15. *The good fortune of those who wait.*

12. Blessed = happy: see on lxxxiv. 4.

O LORD: Heb. 'Yah' (Jah): see on lxxxviii. 8.

law: see on lxxviii. 1.

13. rest: objective rest, = 'security,' is meant, for it involves protection against the unjust rulers until their power is gone.

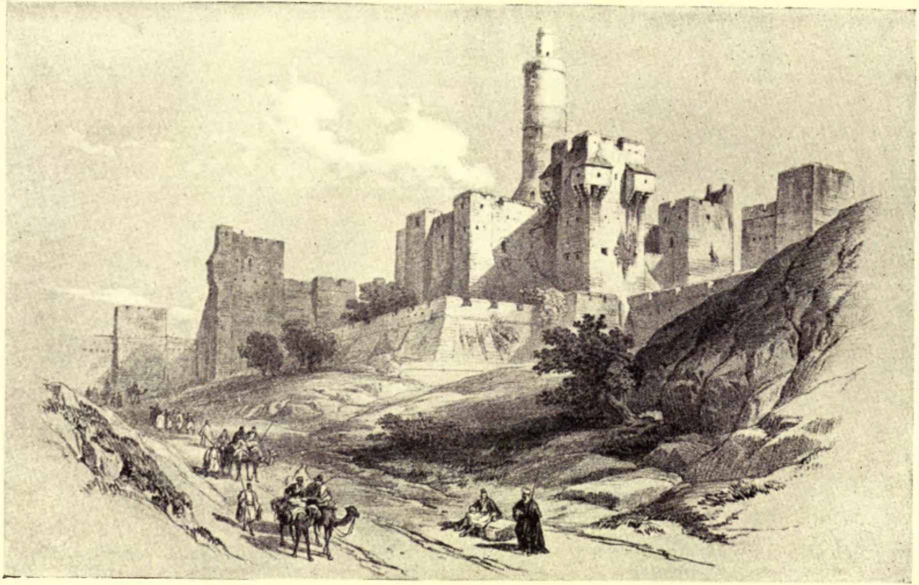
from the days of adversity: rather, 'in the days,' &c.

Until the pit be digged: 'pit' is used figuratively for destruction: 'until the means for their destruction are prepared.'

14 f. Gives reasons for what has been said about **rest** in verse 13.

14. his people—his inheritance—how could Jehovah leave *them*?

15. judgement in this verse means, as in some other passages, the justice of the law courts: customary justice. In the good time foreshadowed the actual justice of the gates will turn (the lit. sense of the verb) towards absolute equity or righteousness: will be in accord with this last.



Drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

JERUSALEM: THE TOWER OF DAVID

Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? 16
Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
Unless the LORD had been my help, 17
My soul had soon dwelt in silence.
When I said, My foot slippeth; 18
Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.
In the multitude of my thoughts within me 19
Thy comforts delight my soul.
Shall the throne of wickedness have fellowship with thee, 20
Which frameth mischief by statute?
They gather themselves together against the soul of the 21
righteous,
And condemn the innocent blood.
But the LORD hath been my high tower; 22
And my God the rock of my refuge.
And he hath brought upon them their own iniquity, 23

16–23. *Sense of security in Jehovah.*

17. silence, i. e. Sheol, the land of silence. This is the later onception of Sheol. See on lxxxviii. 10–13.

18. Render: 'When I think' (='say inwardly') 'my foot has ipt' (='tottered'), 'Thy lovingkindness sustains me.'

19. my thoughts: the Hebrew word means 'distracting oughts': thoughts which divide, distract the mind, cf. Keats's ranched thoughts' (*Ode to Psyche*), and see Matt. vi. 25, where e Greek of 'be not anxious' means literally, 'be not divided ' ('in mind'): 'be not distracted.'

20. frameth: the same word in the same sense in Isa. xlvi. 11.

by statute: these wicked judges are wise as well as cked, for they save themselves by keeping within the rigid quirements of the law.

21. They gather themselves together: read (making a small nge in the text), 'They stir up strife': so Olshausen, &c. e M. T. means, 'They gather themselves together in troops.'

2. But the LORD hath been, &c.: translate, 'But Jehovah will b' &c. In this verb and the first verb of the next verse we have mples of the 'perfect of certainty.'

the rock of my refuge: render, 'my rock of refuge.' As the name 'Rock' for God see on lxxv. 5.

3. he hath brought: render, 'he will bring.'

And shall cut them off in their own evil;
The LORD our God shall cut them off.

95 O come, let us sing unto the LORD:
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,

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iniquity: the Hebrew word means 'trouble,' 'sorrow': then sin, as causing that.

in their own evil: i. e. 'by means of,' &c., not as Hitzig, &c., 'in proportion to.'

PSALM XCV.

Theme. Summons to worship Jehovah, coupled with a warning against unbelief.

I. *Contents.* There are two distinct parts of the Psalm, and perhaps two independent Psalms.

(1) A summons to worship God, with reasons (verses 1–7^b).

(2) A warning against falling into the unbelief of the fathers (verses 7^c–11).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on *Authorship and Date* of Psalm xciii.

Duhm and Cheyne (2) hold that the two parts of the Psalm are two originally independent Psalms composed by two different writers at two different times, just as in our Psalm lxxxi two separate Psalms are brought together. It must be admitted that in this group of Royal Psalms the solemn didactic section (verses 7^c–11) comes in strangely, and appears out of place.

1 f. *Summons to worship God.*

1. sing: rather, 'ring out our joy,' 'express our joy in loud, shrill cries.'

make a joyful noise: the Hebrew verb means 'to shout for joy in honour of some one': so xlvii. 2, lxxxi. 2, xcviii. 6. It has very often the meaning of making a noise with trumpets, as was done on festive occasions: see Num. xvi. 9; Joshua ii. 1, vi. 10, 16. This Psalm is, like Psalm lxxxi. 5^c–16, probably a festival song, and we should therefore translate here: 'Let us sound our trumpets aloud to the rock,' &c. This is supported by the addition made to the same verb in the second part of the next verse. 'Let us sound our trumpets aloud with (accompanying) psalms.' See on lxxxix. 15.

the rock of our salvation: rather, 'our rock of salvation': see on xciv. 22 and (for 'rock') on lxxv. 5.

2. Let us come before his presence: *lit.* 'let us go before

Let us make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
For the LORD is a great God, 3
And a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the deep places of the earth; 4
The heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, and he made it; 5
And his hands formed the dry land.
O come, let us worship and bow down; 6
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker:

His face,' i. e. as servants going to meet their master: the words express an attitude of inferiority. See on lxxxix. 14.

thanksgiving: the Hebrew word (*todah*) means 'confession,' 'acknowledgement,' either that of obligation, so = 'thanksgiving,' or of God's attributes which = 'praise'; both ideas go much together. It is used in general for the hymns sung in the temple.

joyful noise: rather, 'let us sound our trumpets aloud': see on verse 1.

3-5. *Reasons for the exhortations in verses* 1 f.

3. And a great King above all gods: render: 'and a king greater than all gods.'

The existence of the gods with whom Jehovah is compared is apparently implied.

4. deep places: Heb. *lit.* 'explored places': then, as here, 'places reached by digging': so as R. V. 'deep places.' The antithesis with 'the heights of the mountains' negatives the rendering of LXX, Baethgen, &c., 'the distant parts (of the earth).'

The heights of the mountains: according to Hebrew etymology the word rendered 'heights' means 'toilsome heights': but a root found in Arabic gives this noun the sense 'highest point,' 'summit,' 'peak,' which suits admirably.

5. Render: 'To whom belongs the sea, for He made it; And he dry land, (for) His hand formed (it).'

and he made it: a 'circumstantial clause,' to be rendered as bove.

And his hands formed the dry land: render as above. conjunction has probably dropped out of the Hebrew (*waw* = and,' 'for'), which is restored above ('for').

6. our Maker: i. e. the 'one who has made us to be His own eople': not 'our Creator.'

7 For he is our God,
And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of
his hand.
To-day, Oh that ye would hear his voice!
8 Harden not your heart, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness:
9 When your fathers tempted me,
Proved me, and saw my work.
10 Forty years long was I grieved with *that* generation,

7^{ab}. Render (freely): 'For He is our God, Since we are the people whom He has shepherded, and the (erring) sheep whom He has guided by His hand.'

The last clause of verse 7 ('To-day,' &c.) belongs to the next part of the Psalm, and should be attached to verse 8. This is one of the instances in which an altogether new section dealing with a different theme begins within the verse.

For **people of his pasture** (shepherding) see lxxvii. 1, lxxix. 13, &c.

To-day, &c.: it is better to regard 7^{c} as a protasis, the apodosis of which follows in verse 8; render: 'To-day if ye will (but) listen to His voice, (verse 8) Harden not, &c.' Since Jehovah begins to speak in 7^{c} *my* **voice** would have suited best: but in Hebrew poetry the persons are often greatly varied.

8. The reference is to the incident recorded in Exod. xvii. 1–7, which occurred in the second year after the Exodus; cf. the similar incident of Num. xx. 2–13, and see on lxxviii. 15. Meribah ('place of striving') and Massah ('place of tempting') stand for one place according to Exod. xvii. 7, though Num. xx. 2–13 seems to make them two places. In the LXX, Vulg., Jero., as in Heb. iii. 8, the names are translated, though not correctly.

9. tempted me: tried me, as if they wanted to see what I would do.

Proved me: tested me; see Heb. iii. 9.

and saw my work: the Hebrew can mean, and probably does mean, 'though they saw my work'; see Neh. vi. 1; Isa. xlix. 15.

10. Forty years: from the crossing of the Red Sea to entering Canaan; Num. xiv. 32, xxxii. 13.

was I grieved: Heb. 'loathed I,' 'was I disgusted with.' In the LXX, as in Heb. iii. 10, 'I was indignant with,' 'displeased with'; see on cxix. 158.

that **generation:** the pronoun 'that,' though lacking in the

And said, It is a people that do err in their heart,
And they have not known my ways:
Wherefore I sware in my wrath, 11
That they should not enter into my rest.

O sing unto the Lord a new song: **96**
Sing unto the Lord, all the earth.

M. T., is found in the LXX. Probably it was accidentally omitted from the Hebrew.

a people: the LXX (so Heb. iii. 10) implies a longer Hebrew word (*'olam* for *'am*) meaning 'always' or 'for ever': 'they do always err,' &c.

that do err in their heart: *lit.* 'wanderers of heart'; cf. Isa. xxix. 24, 'wanderers in spirit.'

11. Wherefore: rather, 'So that'; cf. Gen. xiii. 16; Deut. xxviii. 27, 51, where the same particle has the same meaning.

Psalm XCVI.

Theme. All nations and all nature are to praise Jehovah because He is universal King.

I. *Title.* In the LXX Psalms xcvi–xcix are 'David' Psalms.

II. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah to be praised in all the earth (verses -3).

(2) He alone of the gods deserves to be praised (verses 4–6).

(3) The heathen summoned to worship Him (verses 7–9).

(4) All nature summoned to rejoice in the sovereignty of ehovah (verses 10–13).

It is Jehovah's reign over Israel that is mainly celebrated in the regoing Royal Psalms: in the present Psalm (see verses 7–9) e heathen are also invoked to bring to Jehovah the tribute of raise.

This Psalm, which is closely allied to Ps. xxix in both spirit and nguage, is cited, with minor deviations, in 1 Chron. xvi. 22–33 as rt of the Psalm which David handed to Asaph and his brethren be sung when the ark was brought to Zion: the version in ronicles can be proved to be dependent on the present Psalm.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. xciii.

1–3. *All the world invoked to praise Jehovah.*

1. new song: from Isa. xlii. 10. A fresh deliverance calls for ew song. See xxxiii. 3, &c.: cf. Rev. v. 9.

all the earth: i. e. all the inhabitants of the earth, the verb

2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name ;
Shew forth his salvation from day to day.
3 Declare his glory among the nations,
His marvellous works among all the peoples.
4 For great is the LORD, and highly to be praised :
He is to be feared above all gods.
5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols :
But the LORD made the heavens.
6 Honour and majesty are before him :
Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
7 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the peoples,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name :
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.

---

being accordingly plural. But verses 3 and 10 make it likely that the scattered Israelites—those of the Diaspora—are meant.

2. With 1^b and 2^b cf. 1 Chron. xvi. 23.

bless: *lit.* 'adore on bended knees.'

his name: Him as manifested in His word and works.

Shew forth, &c.: Heb. 'announce as good tidings His deliverance.'

3. Cf. Isa. lxvi. 18.

nations and **peoples** stand for the heathen. Israelites are to proclaim the glory of Jehovah among the Gentiles.

marvellous works: see on lxxviii. 4.

4-6. *Jehovah to be praised above all gods.*

4. highly to be praised: or 'very praiseworthy.'

above all gods: render, 'more than all gods.' See on xcv. 3.

5. idols: the radical sense of the Hebrew word is probably 'a feeble being' (cf. Aramaic). The Assyrian suggests a meaning 'nothingness' (cf. Heb. *'al*). The LXX translates the word here and elsewhere by 'demons': see *Magic*, &c., by the present writer, p. 38.

6. before him: as vassals, see on lxxxix. 14 and on xcv. 2.

his sanctuary: in 1 Chron. xvi. 27 'in His place.' The recently erected temple is meant, or perhaps heaven.

7-9. *The heathen summoned to worship God.*

7. kindred: the Hebrew word denotes a part of a tribe. 'Clan' seems the best English equivalent.

8. courts: in the temple of Zerubbabel there were two courts,

O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: 9
Tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations, The LORD reigneth: 10
The world also is stablished that it cannot be moved:
He shall judge the peoples with equity.
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; 11
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
Let the field exult, and all that is therein; 12
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy;
Before the LORD, for he cometh; 13
For he cometh to judge the earth:

---

that of the priests and that of the Israelites: see Hastings' *DB.*, v. p. 713 (article 'Temple,' by the present writer). Neither of hese could of right be entered by Gentiles: but here the Gentiles re invited to take their place alongside the Israelites in the emple courts, that all may unite in one song of praise to the niversal King.

9. in the beauty of holiness: the Hebrew means 'with holy ttire.'

10–13. *All nature invoked to acclaim the kingship of Jehovah.*

10. The LORD reigneth: has become, once more, King: see n xciii. 1.

is stablished: read, 'He has adjusted' or 'set in order the orld': the same Hebrew consonants can have this meaning. o LXX, Sym., Pesh., Jero.

The world: *lit.* '(the) productive world.' See on lxxxix. 12.

11. rejoice: Heb. 'exult' = leap for joy.

the fulness thereof: 'that which fills it,' the fishes, &c. ee Isa. xlii. 10, and note the phrase 'earth and its fulness,' xxiv. 1, 12, lxxxix. 12.

See lxix. 34, xcviii. 4, &c.: cf. Joel i f.; Isa. xxiv, &c., where nilar sympathy between man and nature is expressed.

12. field: not field in our sense, but the free open land in conist with the land on which cities are built: so Mic. iv. 10; Jer. 7.

Then: render, 'yea,' changing one letter (*p* for *z*), both much ce in Hebrew.

13. For he cometh: occurs twice, another instance of 'anadisis.' See on xciii. 4, and on cxxxv. 12.

to judge: 'to rule.' See on lxxxi. 4.

He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with his truth.

97 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad.
2 Clouds and darkness are round about him:
Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of his throne.

---

peoples: plural of the word usually applied to Israel, but meaning here probably faithful ones among all nations.

truth: 'faithfulness': Jehovah's administration is characterized by justice (cf. **with righteousness**) towards all, and by faithfulness towards those who keep His covenant.

PSALM XCVII.

Theme. Jehovah's appearance in majesty and judgement; a terror to the wicked, a solace to the righteous.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's manifestation as King. Once more He has come forth amid many signs to assert His royal prerogatives (verses 1–6).

(2) The effect of His coming, upon the wicked—confusion: upon the righteous—gladness (verses 7–9).

(3) Lessons suggested by this Theophany (verses 10–12).

This Psalm, compiled for liturgical purposes, is made up of extracts from earlier Scriptures very deftly woven together.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on Ps. xciii.

1–6. *Jehovah's accession to the throne, with the accompanying signs.*

1. See Isa. xlii. 10, 12, li. 5.

The LORD reigneth: i.e. has become King. See on xciii. 1.

rejoice: Heb. 'exult,' 'leap for joy.'

isles: a word taken from Deutero-Isaiah, where it is very common. It has there, and therefore here, the meaning 'coastlands,' 'lands bordering on the sea,' especially the Mediterranean. The word means also 'island,' as in Jer. xlvii. 4.

Verses 2, 3 and 6 depend on l. 3–6. Perhaps the account of the Theophany on Sinai has suggested the imagery in both Psalms: see Exod. xix. 16, xx. 21; Deut. v. 22.

2. With 2^a cf. xviii. 8–12.

2^b is extracted from lxxxix. 14^a.

Two complementary truths are uttered concerning Jehovah in

A fire goeth before him, 3
And burneth up his adversaries round about.
His lightnings lightened the world: 4
The earth saw, and trembled.
The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, 5
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declare his righteousness, 6
And all the peoples have seen his glory.
Ashamed be all they that serve graven images, 7
That boast themselves of idols:

---

this verse: He is enshrouded in mystery: yet His rule is righteous.

For the distinction between **righteousness** and **judgement** see on xciv. 14.

3. Cf. l. 3; Deut. iv. 24; Isa. xlii. 25.

Render: 'Fire goes before Him,
And it blazes about His footsteps.'

his adversaries: read, 'His footsteps,' inserting a letter into he Hebrew word. So Wellhausen, &c. Parallelism favours this change.

The narrative tenses in 4-6, if written for this Psalm, would eem to point to specific events, such as the destruction of the Babylonians and the restoration to Palestine. But the tenses are ue to the source, though the fact of their being here at all is in avour of their suitability.

4. 4^a from lxxvii. 18, 4^b from lxxvii. 16.

5. Cf. 5^a after Mic. i. 4, 5^b after Mic. iv. 13; Zech. iv. 14, &c.

at the presence of the LORD (first occurrence) should be mitted as the rhythm suggests; it is a dittograph.

6. Cf. l. 6; Isa. xxxv. 2, xl. 5, lii. 10, lxvi. 18.

The heavens are witnesses of the Divine **righteousness** = faithfulness); see l. 4.

7-9. *Results of the Theophany upon the heathen and upon Israel.* There is no need with Hupfeld, &c. to transpose verses 7 f. beuse the verbs in verse 8 have their object in verse 6. What Zion ard and rejoiced over was the judgement on idolaters implied verse 7.

7. See Isa. xlii. 17, xliv. 11, and especially xlv. 16.

Render: 'All image-worshippers are foiled (confounded), viz. ose who boasted in their helpless (gods): all gods bowed down fore Him.'

Worship him, all ye gods.
8 Zion heard and was glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoiced;
Because of thy judgements, O LORD.
9 For thou, LORD, art most high above all the earth:
Thou art exalted far above all gods.
10 O ye that love the LORD, hate evil:
He preserveth the souls of his saints;
He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
11 Light is sown for the righteous,

The verbs are wrongly translated as imperatives in the E.VV. (so LXX, &c.).

gods: in LXX 'angels,' from a reluctance to acknowledge the real existence of heathen deities. Heb. i. 6 follows the LXX here as this epistle does always.

8. From xlviii. 11, but in the original passage Zion *witnesses* the deliverance: in the present verse Zion *hears* of it. In lii. 7 the messengers are bidden to go and tell Zion, 'Thy God has become King.' Here Zion has heard.

Zion: i. e. the people of Jerusalem. See Additional Note, p. 368.

heard: what? of the fall of Babylon and of the certain prospect of restoration.

daughters of Judah: i. e. the dependent cities of Judah.

judgements: here Jehovah's judicial sentences as indicated by recent events.

9. From xlvii. 2, 9, lxxxiii. 18: cf. xcv. 3.

most high: the Heb. word (*Elyōn*) is often used of God as a title of dignity. Melchizedek was a priest of God (*elyon*, 'high,' or 'very high'). One of the Phoenician gods was called '*Eliun*,' the same word.

10-12. *Some lessons of the Theophany.*

10. Cf. xxxiv. 20, xxxvii. 28; Amos v. 15.

Read and render:

'Jehovah loves those who hate evil:
He guards the life of His favoured ones:
From the power' (*lit.* 'hand') 'of the wicked He rescues them.'

The changes in the Hebrew necessary to yield the above are few and unimportant.

11. is sown: read, 'has risen,' *zarakh* and *zaru'* (changing one consonant): so nearly all ancient versions. See cxii. 4.

And gladness for the upright in heart.
Be glad in the Lord, ye righteous; 12
And give thanks to his holy name.

A Psalm. 98

O sing unto the Lord a new song; 1
For he hath done marvellous things:
His right hand, and his holy arm, hath wrought salvation
for him.
The Lord hath made known his salvation: 2
His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of
the nations.

---

12. 12^{a} is from xxxii. 11^{a}, 12^{b} from xxx. 4^{b}.

name: Heb. 'memorial,' i. e. what one is remembered by: e cxxxv. 13; Exod. iii. 15.

Psalm XCVIII.

Theme. Man and nature urged to praise Jehovah for His liverance.

I. *Contents.* (1) Men are urged to praise Jehovah for what e has done. But the largest place is given to a description the grounds of the exhortation: cf. Ps. xcvi, where the appeal men to praise Jehovah is repeated thrice before anything is said the reason (verses 1-6).

(2) Nature is invoked to join in the anthem of praise (verses 7-9).

Like Ps. xcvii this one borrows largely, and it was also no ubt compiled to be used in the worship of the temple.

I. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on Ps. xciii.

-6. *Men urged to praise Jehovah.*

. See Ps. xcvi. 1^{a}, 3^{b}.

a new song: see on xcvi. 1.

His right hand, &c.: render: 'His right hand has wrought d verance for him, His holy arm has (aided him).' The balance o he sentences would be much helped by supplying, as Baethgen r mmends, some such verb as 'aid' after '**His holy arm.**'

. See Isa. lii. 10, lxiii. 5.

righteousness is parallel to **salvation**, and means the same (s n Isa. xl ff.).

3 He hath remembered his mercy and his faithfulness
toward the house of Israel:
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our
God.
4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth:
Break forth and sing for joy, yea, sing praises.
5 Sing praises unto the LORD with the harp;
With the harp and the voice of melody.
6 With trumpets and sound of cornet
Make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.
7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein;
8 Let the floods clap their hands;

---

3. For 3^b^ see Isa. lii. 10.

Render 3^a^: 'He has remembered His favour unto Jacob, and His faithfulness unto the house of Israel.' We must, with the LXX, supply 'unto Jacob' at the end of the first clause. This greatly helps the rhythm.

4-6. *All men are to salute their King with voice and with musical instruments.*

4. With 4^a cf. xlvii. 2, 6, lxvi. 1, 4, c. 1, &c.; with 4^b cf. Isa. lii. 9.

Make a joyful noise: render: 'Blow aloud your trumpets unto Jehovah,' &c. The Hebrew may be translated either way; see on xcv. 1.

Break forth and sing for joy: render: 'Break forth into ringing shouts of joy.'

sing praises: the Hebrew can also mean 'play on stringed instruments'; probably that is its meaning here.

5. Cf. Isa. li. 3.

Sing praises: here as in verse 4 we should probably render 'play': this is supported by the noun following.

with the harp: better, 'with the lyre': see p. 27 f.

6. For the (metallic) **trumpets** and the (ram's horn) **cornet,** see p. 29 f.

Make a joyful noise: i. e. sound the trumpets aloud.

7-9. *Nature invoked to join in the loud acclamation of Jehovah's sovereignty.*

7. 7^a from xcvi. 11^b; 7^b from xxiv. 1.

8. Let the floods clap, &c. See Isa. lv. 12.

Let the hills sing for joy together;
Before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth: 9
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with equity.

The Lord reigneth; let the peoples tremble: **99**
He sitteth upon the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
The Lord is great in Zion; 2
And he is high above all the peoples.
Let them praise thy great and terrible name: 3
Holy is he.

---

9. This verse is a mere repetition of xcvi. 13, omitting one occurrence of 'He is come.'

Psalm XCIX.

Theme. A call to praise Jehovah's holiness.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's holiness to be praised, because it is pledge of His righteous rule (verses 1–5).

(2) Jehovah's holiness illustrated (verses 6–9).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. xciii.

1–3. *Exhortation to recognize Jehovah's holiness.*

1. The LORD reigneth: as in xciii. 1.

let the peoples . . . let the earth, &c. It is better to make he verbs imperatives as the versions do.

He sitteth, &c.: rather, according to Heb., '(even) He who ts,' &c.: the words constitute an epithet applied to Jehovah. Jehovah has become King . . . (even) He who sits enthroned on herubs.' God is similarly described in lxxx. 1; 1 Sam. iv. 4; Sam. vi. 2; 2 Kings xix. 15, &c.

Concerning the meaning of the phrase see on lxxx. 1 and on i. 4 (**wings**).

in Zion: where the temple was and where Jehovah dwelt e-eminently among men: see note, pp. 368 ff. This God of rael, whose earthly abode is the temple mount, is great.

high above: probably we should render, 'higher than.'

the peoples: here the heathen nations are meant: they ve dared to deny Jehovah's authority, but He is far beyond em in power.

3 f. Render: 'Let them praise thy great and terrible name oly is He), 4. And (let them praise) the might of the King who es righteousness' (= 'faithfulness'): 'Thou hast established uity: Thou hast executed righteous judgement in Jacob.'

n verse 3 **Holy is He** is a liturgical addition, which as little

4 The king's strength also loveth judgement;
Thou dost establish equity,
Thou executest judgement and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt ye the Lord our God,
And worship at his footstool:
Holy is he.

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests,
And Samuel among them that call upon his name;
They called upon the Lord, and he answered them.
7 He spake unto them in the pillar of cloud:
They kept his testimonies, and the statute that he gav
them.
8 Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God:

---

breaks the connexion between verses 3 f. as the refrain at the en of each verse in Ps. cxxxvi does that for the verses of that Psalm The verb in verse 3 must be understood also with the noun whic in Hebrew opens verse 4 ('might').

Various other interpretations of these verses have been offere and defended, but lack of space does not permit their being dis cussed here.

judgement and righteousness: another instance of hendiady —one compound idea expressed by two nouns: judgement refer to administration, righteousness to the principle governing th administration: so the two nouns = righteous judging or ruling.

5. footstool: the Hebrew expression is used only figurativel in the O. T.: it means here the temple, as in cxxxii. 7, &c.

6–9. *What is said respecting Jehovah in verses 1–5 illustrated an enforced by His treatment of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel.*

These three men called upon Jehovah, worshipping Him an seeking forgiveness. This involves an acknowledgement on thei part of His sovereignty, and His hearing and answering then shows Him to be a gracious King as well as a great one.

6. Moses and Aaron among his priests: when the Psalm wa written the priestly office was thought much of, and all Israelitish leaders of the past were apt to be regarded as belonging to thi honoured class: cf. the conception in the Priestly Code (P) and in Chronicles of the religious life of Israel in the wilderness.

7. pillar of cloud: see Exod. xxxiii. 7 f.: cf. Num. xii. 5.

testimonies: 'solemn injunctions.'

Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
Though thou tookest vengeance of their doings.
Exalt ye the Lord our God, 9
And worship at his holy hill;
For the Lord our God is holy.

A Psalm of thanksgiving. 100

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. 1

Psalm C.

Theme. A summons to praise Jehovah.

I. *Title.* Render: 'A Psalm for the thankoffering'; this Psalm being sung, there is reason for believing, when the thankoffering was presented at the temple, a usage suggested perhaps by the word 'thanksgiving' in verse 4. The thankoffering was made when there was something outstanding for which to give God thanks. See Lev. vii. 11 ff.

II. *Contents.* There is in the Psalm a commingling of exhortations to thank and serve Jehovah, together with reasons for the same.

The Psalm was evidently composed for public worship, and it has been used as such probably more than any other Psalm. It is sung in the modern Synagogue daily, except on Sabbath nd feast days; and in the Christian Church few hymns are ung more frequently or more lustily than this one in the metrical ersion of William Kethe, 'All nations that on earth do dwell,' &c. We owe the name 'Old Hundredth' to this Scottish version, the ymn being taken from the old version of the Psalms by Sternhold nd Hopkins.

The exhortations of the Psalm are directed, specially, if not xclusively, to Israelites, for the persons addressed are '*His* eople': they were made His people (see on verse 3): they are rged to unite in the ritual of the temple.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm appears to be conmporary with the other Royal Psalms—this being the last of the ries.

1. Make a joyful noise: see on xcv. 2, xcviii. 4, 'shout aloud' n praise) is the likelier meaning here.

all ye lands: Heb. 'all the land' (=Palestine) or 'all the rth.' The rest of the Psalm shows that Israel is addressed, so at we must understand the Israelites all over the earth, or the abitants of Palestine.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
3 Know ye that the LORD he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
5 For the LORD is good; his mercy *endureth* for ever;
And his faithfulness unto all generations.

101 A Psalm of David.

1 I will sing of mercy and judgement:

---

2. Serve: in the late sense of 'worship,' as in xxii. 31, &c.

with singing: 'with ringing shouts of joy.'

3. Know ye: either 'get to know,' 'learn from His doings,' so cxix. 23; 1 Sam. xxiii. 23, &c., or 'acknowledge,' 'confess' (in words); see li. 5; Isa. lix. 12; Jer. iii. 13, xiv. 20. The verb means also 'consider,' 'ponder over,' as in Judges xviii. 14, &c., and it may well have that sense here.

he . . . hath made us: what we are, an elect nation: so Deut. xxxii. 6, 15; Isa. lxvi. 2.

4. gates: those leading from the outside into the temple gates, there were three such, viz., on the north, east and south.

thanksgiving: 'a thankoffering,' see xcvi. 8. Parallelism, however, favours here the sense 'thanksgiving.' But when the title was prefixed the word was interpreted as = 'thankoffering'; see Lev. vii. 11 ff.

5. good: i. e. kind, as in xxv. 8, xxxiv. 9, &c.

PSALM CI.

Theme. A king's vow to conduct himself and his kingdom aright.

I. *Contents.* (1) The king's vow regarding himself (verses 1-4). (2) The king's vow as to his treatment of others, especially the wicked (verses 5-8).

The Psalm has been called a 'mirror for magistrates,' 'a mirror for a king,' &c.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of this Psalm on Proverbs (see on verses 2, 5), the dirge (*qinah*), metre, &c. point to a late date. Though it is generally regarded as containing a

Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing praises.
I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way: 2
Oh when wilt thou come unto me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
I will set no base thing before mine eyes: 3
I hate the work of them that turn aside;

---

king's confession of faith, nothing in the Psalm itself proves that a king wrote it or that a king's sentiments are uttered in it. Any high official in the state would meet the requirements of the case, though the old view is not excluded by anything in the Psalm.

1–4. *The king's vow as to his own life.*

1. mercy and judgement: render, 'lovingkindness and justice;' the virtues which he sings of are not Divine attributes but qualities of human action. It is of the latter alone that the Psalm speaks. See Hos. xii. 6; Isa. xvi. 5.

2. wisely: in the ethical sense—'rightly.'

way = conduct, cf. xxxix. 1, cxix. 5, 26.

when wilt thou come unto me? i. e. to favour and bless me. See Gen. xviii. 10; Exod. xx. 24; Deut. xxxiii. 2. Those who think David the speaker in this Psalm refer to 2 Sam. vi. 9.

within my house: in the East the personal character of the ing, his conduct at home, has everything to do with his conduct s ruler.

3. base thing: Heb. 'a thing of belial': according to the usual tymology 'belial' is a compound word = 'worthlessness'; then wickedness' (cf. 'naughtiness'). Hence 'a man of belial' 1 Sam. xxv. 25, &c.) is 'a wicked man'; cf. Deut. xiii. 14, here the plural occurs. It is wrong to accept this etymology nd at the same time to treat the word as a proper name (Belial): is mistake is made in the R. V., e. g. 'men of Belial,' 'sons of elial,' &c., though the etymology just noticed seems accepted. nother etymology, one which also assumes the word to be mpound, makes it = 'one who will never rise': 'a ne'er-do-weel.' ommel and Cheyne are probably right in identifying Belial with e Babylonian Bilili, the god of the underworld, a view confirmed the fact that in later times Belial came to have the same meaning Satan; see 2 Cor. v. 15. Compound words are rare in Hebrew, ich is an argument against the other two explanations given. hatever may be the origin of the word, it has in the O. T. the neral sense of 'wickedness,' and when joined to 'man,' 'son,' ., see on lxxix. 11, it means one who is wicked: hence 'sons of ial' = 'wicked men,' 'a thing of belial' = 'a base or sinful thing.'

the work, &c.: better, 'the practice of obliquities' = 'the doing what deviates from the right.'

It shall not cleave unto me.
4 A froward heart shall depart from me:
I will know no evil thing.
5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy:
Him that hath an high look and a proud heart will I not suffer.
6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me:
He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister unto me.
7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house:
He that speaketh falsehood shall not be established before mine eyes.
8 Morning by morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land;
To cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the Lord.

102 A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord,

---

4. froward: Heb. 'perverted,' 'twisted' (from the right).

I will know: i. e. be intimate with, show sympathy with, as the verb is used in i. 6.

5-8. *The king's vow as to his treatment of his subjects.*

5. Him that hath a high look: *lit.* 'who is lofty-eyed.'

proud heart: *lit.* (who is) 'broad of heart,' i. e. whose thoughts are large, blatant. See Prov. xxi. 1.

will I not suffer: better, 'I cannot endure,' 'put up with'; see Isa. i. 13.

6. minister: the Hebrew verb is the technical one for taking part in religious worship. See ciii. 21, civ. 4; cf. xxxii. 2, lii. 4, lxxviii. 57; Hos. vii. 18.

7. worketh: we should say 'practises.'

shall not be established = shall have no permanent place.

8. city of the LORD: i. e. Jerusalem; see Isa. i. 26, &c.

PSALM CII.

Theme. Prayer of one in deep distress that Jehovah may pity him.

And let my cry come unto thee.
Hide not thy face from me in the day of my distress : 2
Incline thine ear unto me ;
In the day when I call answer me speedily.
For my days consume away like smoke, 3

I. *Title.* The title to this Psalm is noteworthy in that it prescribes the occasion on which an individual is to use the Psalm, not surely in song, but by way of personal meditation. See the titles to Psalms xcii and c.

II. *Contents.* The writer describes his distress, and prays to Jehovah for help (verses 1-11).

(2) His hope and confidence in Jehovah (verses 12-28).

This Psalm owes much to other parts of the O. T., Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c.

This is one of the so-called Penitential Psalms of the Church, the others being vi, xxxii, xxxviii, li, cii, cxxx, and cxliii.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of this Psalm on Deut., Job, Isa. xl ff., Lam. and on other Psalms shows that it is late one. The citations from Psalms lxix and lxxix favour a date luring the Maccabean age. A period of great national sorrow is mplied. Perhaps, as Duhm points out, we have two Psalms here nd not one, for the sections verses 1-11 and verses 12-28 differ nuch from each other. There is nothing said or suggested in erses 1-11 about the sad state of Jerusalem, though the desponding pirit pervading these verses may be due to that condition. If ve accept the unity of the Psalm we have here another example of he twofold division of threnode Psalms : see introduction to Ps. xxix (*Contents*).

1-11. *The Psalmist describes his sad condition, and cries to Jehovah r help.*

1 f. The opening prayers of these verses are uttered in language orrowed from other Psalms : see xviii. 6, xxvii. 9, xxxi. 2, xxxix. 2, lvi. 9, lix. 16 f.

1. my cry : Heb. 'my cry for help.'

come unto thee : in none of the Psalms is the late Jewish lief implied that prayer was conveyed into God's throne-room the four 'angels of the presence.'

2. See lxviii. 17. LXX, Pesh., 'Turn not away,' reading *tasēr* for *ster*. This makes excellent sense.

Hide not, &c. : God's anger is the cause of the writer's stress.

And my bones are burned as a firebrand.
4 My heart is smitten like grass, and withered ;
For I forget to eat my bread.
5 By reason of the voice of my groaning
My bones cleave to my flesh.
6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness ;
I am become as an owl of the waste places.
7 I watch, and am become

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3. my bones are burned: in Job xxx. 30 of a sick man in fever : cf. xxxi. 10, xxxii. 3, lxix. 4. On the contrary, in a state of health and happiness the bones are said to spring up—to flourish, like young grass : see Isa. lxvi. 14.

firebrand: Heb. 'that which is burning,' and so 'what is rapidly coming to an end.' For **days** we should probably read 'bowels,' which makes a good parallel with **bones** : the difference in the Hebrew is slight. The word **days** came by mistake into this verse from verse 11. The verb rendered **are burned** denotes here a state of pain such as fire causes.

4. My heart: regarded as the centre and spring of life and as the reservoirs of the humours of the body.

smitten: as by sunstroke : see cxxi. 6 ; Isa. xlix. 10, and especially Hos. ix. 16 and Jonah iv. 1.

grass: Heb. 'herbage.'

and withered: 'and dried up' : where there should be sap (blood, &c.), there is dryness.

For I forget: translate, 'surely I forget' : the Hebrew can mean either.

5. The violent and prolonged straining of the voice causes the body to waste away : see xxxi. 10 ; Job iii. 24.

my flesh: render, 'my skin,' the sense of the Arabic cognate. The bones attach themselves to the skin, there is no flesh between, so emaciated is he : see Job xix. 20.

6. pelican: an unclean bird (Lev. xi. 18, &c.), not now met with in Palestine except in the neighbourhood of Lake Huleh. It is, according to Thompson, the most sombre and austere of birds.

owl: the small owl called *Athene meridionalis* is here meant according to Tristram. It is unclean (Lev. xi. 17, &c.) and delights to make its home in ruined deserted buildings, the meaning of **waste places.**

7. I watch: better, I am sleepless, I keep awake ; see cxxvii. 1.

am become: read, 'and moan.'

Like a sparrow that is alone upon the housetop.
Mine enemies reproach me all the day; 8
They that are mad against me do curse by me.
For I have eaten ashes like bread, 9
And mingled my drink with weeping.
Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: 10
For thou hast taken me up, and cast me away.
My days are like a shadow that declineth; 11
And I am withered like grass.

But thou, O LORD, shalt abide for ever; 12

---

sparrow: Heb. 'a small bird.'

alone: Thompson says that when one of these small birds has lost his mate 'he will sit on the housetop alone and lament by the hour.'

8. They that are mad against me: read (changing one vowel), 'They that make a fool of me,' 'that mock me' (Duhm).

do curse by me: as if they said, 'may your plight be as niserable as that of' (the speaker in this Psalm). See Isa. lxv. 5, &c. Contrast with this Gen. xxii. 18 ('shall bless themselves y thy seed').

9. See on lxxx. 5.

ashes: a symbol of mourning when thrown on the head: ee Joshua vii. 6, &c. Cf. Job ii. 8; mourning took the place of ating.

And mingled my drink with weeping: i. e. with tears, and ot, as formerly, with sweet and refreshing spices: see xlii. 3 nd lxxx. 5.

10. Jehovah had in His sin-caused anger lifted them up to high level of prosperity, only to hurl them down to their present egraded condition. The figure is that of a hurricane which first aises a man off his feet, and then throws him violently to the ound: see Job xxvii. 31.

cast me away: the Hebrew verb means primarily 'to throw own' (Gen. lvii. 22, &c.).

11. a shadow that declineth: rather, 'like a lengthening adow'; shadows are shortest at noonday, becoming longer as e day wears on.

grass: Heb. 'herbage,' as in verse 4.

12–28. *The Psalmist's hope and confidence in God.* These verses nstitute, perhaps, an independent Psalm. According to Duhm ey differ much from the foregoing verses, but this may be

And thy memorial unto all generations.
13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion:
For it is time to have pity upon her, yea, the set time is come.
14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
And have pity upon her dust.
15 So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD,

---

accounted for by the turning away of the writer from his own misery to the pity and faithfulness of Jehovah.

In verses 12-22 the Psalmist rejoices in the near prospect of a restored Zion, whose very stones and dust are dear to the Jew. Heathen nations and their kings, and also unborn Israelites, would acknowledge Jehovah on seeing what He will have done for the city.

12. This verse is from Lam. v. 19, 'throne' being changed to 'memorial.'

But thou: in Heb. 'Thou' is emphatic; render, 'But Thou—Thou O Jehovah,' &c. A strong contrast with the preceding is implied: 'My life is fast ebbing away' (verse 11), 'but Thou abidest,' &c.; see, however, next note.

shalt abide: better, 'sittest as king,' 'sittest enthroned.' The eternal kingship of Jehovah comes once more before us.

memorial: i. e. that by which one is remembered; so here God's revealed character. It has virtually the same sense as 'name,' with which it is parallel in cxxxv. 13, &c.

Thou abidest for ever as our King and as our God; cf. Browning's 'God's in His heaven—All 's right with the world.'

13. have mercy: rather, 'pity,' 'compassionate.'

Zion = Jerusalem: see note p. 368.

to have pity upon: rather, 'to be gracious to.'

time: the word used in Eccles. iii. 1 ff.

set time: a time definitely set apart for some special purpose: especially of an annually recurring period, as of the feast days, Exod. xiii. 10, &c.

14. The fact that Jehovah's servants feel an affectionate interest in the very stones and dust of Jerusalem is a sign that God's appointed time of deliverance has arrived.

thy servants: see on lxxxvi. 2.

15-18. *When Jehovah has delivered His people, and restored Jerusalem and the temple, the heathen and their kings will acknowledge Him as the one true God.* Much in these verses reminds one of Isa. xl. ff.

15. See Isa. lix. 19, lx. 2 f.

And all the kings of the earth thy glory:
For the LORD hath built up Zion, 16
He hath appeared in his glory;
He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute, 17
And hath not despised their prayer.
This shall be written for the generation to come: 18
And a people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.
For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; 19
From heaven did the LORD behold the earth;
To hear the sighing of the prisoner; 20
To loose those that are appointed to death;
That men may declare the name of the LORD in Zion, 21
And his praise in Jerusalem;
When the peoples are gathered together, 22

---

16 For: render, 'When,' and continue the force of the word to the end of verse 17, translating verse 16 f. thus: 16. 'When Jehovah has built up Zion, (when) He has manifested Himself in His glory, 17. (when) He has turned to the prayer of the destitute, And not despised their prayer.'

18. This: i. e. what God is about to do: see verses 16 f.

written: we should now say 'printed.' Writing is referred o in Exod. xvii. 14, xxxiv. 27; Deut. xxxi. 19; Jer. xxx. 2.

the LORD: Heb. Jah (*Yah*): see on lxxxix. 8.

Verses 19-22 are parallel to verses 16 f., and in each case 'When' nust take the place of **For.** These verses do not contain a statenent of fact as to what Jehovah *has* done, but continue the upposition of verse 16, which verse 18 interrupts: 'When ehovah has looked,' &c.

19. For: render, 'When.'

the height of his sanctuary: render, 'His holy height': heaven' is meant, as the parallelism shows.

20. those that are appointed to death: rather, 'those living death-like life.' See on lxxix. 11, *lit.* 'sons of death.' The hrase is borrowed here from lxxix. 11.

21. That men: 'men' is not in the Hebrew, though the sense ay be. As far as the original is concerned the **prisoners** and e 'sons of death' may be the subject of the verb: but we are obably to understand the peoples (kingdoms) in verse 22 as e subject: see verse 15.

22. Non-Jewish peoples and kingdoms will gather to Jerusalem worship Jehovah.

And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.
23 He weakened my strength in the way;
He shortened my days.
24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days:
Thy years are throughout all generations.
25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth;
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure:

---

23. In this verse the Psalmist returns to the complaining of verse 11.

He weakened: render, 'He brought down,' 'reduced.'

my strength: the written text (*keth.*) and the LXX have '*His* strength.' If this is followed, we must render 'His strength laid me low,' i. e. God used His strength to afflict him. But the other authorities have 'my strength.'

in the way: i. e. in the journey of life (Hupfeld, &c.), not in the journey through the wilderness or through the desert.

24. take me not away: Heb. 'take me not up,' assumed by practically all commentators (from Rashi downwards) to mean 'take me not away' (by death): yet the Hebrew verb (='to take up') never has that sense anywhere else. It is used, however, for 'to offer up as a sacrifice,' and that usage gives the best clue to the meaning here: 'Do not let me be put to death as animals are for sacrifice.'

Thy years, &c.: the eternal existence of God is used as a plea that God may not further shorten man's short life: Cheyne (2) thinks verses 25-27 a late insertion from a poem, the rest of which is lost. But God's eternal unchangeableness is quite naturally suggested by verse 24; cf. verses 11 f.

25-27 are applied to Christ in Heb. i. 10-12, the words being taken from the LXX. As originally written they refer to Jehovah as such: but those for whom the epistle was primarily written, being Jews, believed that this Psalm refers to the Messiah. The author argues with them on their own ground.

26. As compared with man the heavens and the hills are spoken of as everlasting; but in comparison with Jehovah they are but evanescent.

perish: not cease to exist, but cease to be what they are; perish as earth and heavens.

Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be
changed:
But thou art the same, 27
And thy years shall have no end.
The children of thy servants shall continue, 28
And their seed shall be established before thee.

A Psalm of David. 103

Bless the LORD, O my soul; 1

---

wax old: the Hebrew word (*balah*) is used of garments (Deut. viii. 4, xxix. 4), of bones (Ps. xxxii. 3), of a sick man (Job xiii. 28), of an aged and frail woman (Gen. xviii. 12).

shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: the ame verb is twice used in Hebrew as in English, only in the riginal there is a word-play which English fails to reproduce. he Hebrew rendered 'shall be changed' = 'shall pass away'; he figure of the garment is now dropped.

28. Since God endures unchangeable, the permanent well-being f His servant is secured; see Isa. lxv. 9, lxvi. 12.

thy servants: see on lxxxvi. 2.

shall continue: Heb. 'shall dwell,' i.e. in the land; see ix. 36.

before thee: see Ps. xvi. 11.

PSALM CIII.

Theme. The duty of praising Jehovah on account of His mpassion and lovingkindness.

I. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist summons himself to praise Jehovah His mercies (verses 1–5).

(2) Jehovah has revealed His pity and love (verses 6–12).

(3) Though man is weak and soon passes away, Jehovah is rnal (verses 13–18).

(4) Seeing God is universal King, the whole universe is nmoned to praise Him (verses 19–22).

The thoughts of the Psalm are by no means sharply separated: writer is carried along by the dominating thought—the infinite dness of Jehovah—and he is not careful to observe logical uence. It is one of the most beautiful of the Psalms, alike ts thought and in its pathos, though less profound than some. writer is too comfortably situated to think or feel deeply.

And all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits:
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm seems to voice the gratitude of the writer and of his fellow countrymen, in view of some recent national deliverance, but whether that is the deliverance from Babylon or from the Syrian army, or whether some other national blessing is meant, must, with our present knowledge, remain uncertain.

In verses 1-5 the writer speaks in the singular, as he is uttering his own thoughts. In verses 6 f. he falls into the plural under the influence of the feeling that his sentiments are shared by others.

Psalms 103 f. seem to go together, and had perhaps one author. The self-urging to praise occurs only in these two Psalms (see verses 1-5 and 22, and Ps. civ. 1, 35).

1-5. *Jehovah to be praised for His mercies.*

1. my soul: i. e. 'myself': see on lxxviii. 18, cvii. 18.

all that is within me = 'my whole self,' 'my entire personality.'

his holy name = Him as being holy. 'Name' here is almost equal to the pronoun: see on lxxix. 9.

2. And forget not all: for 'all' substitute 'any'; or, render, 'And forget none of His benefits'; this is what the Hebrew means.

3. iniquities: Heb. 'iniquity' in the singular. The idea in the word is 'perversity,' 'crookedness'; 'that which is twisted from the right.'

diseases: or 'sicknesses': the Hebrew word occurs in the plural only; it is found also in Deut. xxix. 21, &c.

The Psalmist had received both moral and physical blessings: pardon and bodily healing.

4. thy life = thy own self: see on verse 1. The word 'life' has often the sense 'self' or 'soul,' 'heart,' &c.

destruction: Heb. 'the pit': it stands for Sheol, which is here pictured as claiming the Psalmist when he was on the point of dying: but Jehovah quashed the claim; paid, as it were, the ransom, and so brought him back to life and health; 'redeem' or 'ransom' is here used figuratively. See Hos. xiii. 14, and cf. Gen. xlviii. 16; Lam. iii. 58. On the verb 'redeem' (*ga'al*) used here see on lxxiv. 2.

crowneth thee: the same figure in Prov. iii. 3; cf. viii. 5.

Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender
mercies:
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; 5
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle.
The Lord executeth righteous acts, 6
And judgements for all that are oppressed.
He made known his ways unto Moses, 7
His doings unto the children of Israel.
The Lord is full of compassion and gracious, 8
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
He will not always chide; 9

---

tender mercies: better, 'compassions.'

5. thy mouth: read, 'thy desire,' making a slight change in the Hebrew. The word in the M. T. means 'thy ornament,' by which 'thy soul' may be meant, just as 'glory' stands for soul: see on cviii. 1.

is renewed: rather, 'renews itself.'

like the eagle: as the eagle renews its feathers: see Isa. xl. 31.

6-12. *Jehovah's gracious dealings.*

6. righteous acts: acts which display the Divine righteousness n keeping the terms of His covenant: so = 'saving acts.' In sa. xl ff. 'righteousness' means virtually 'deliverance,' for it nvolves it.

judgements: here = 'acts of deliverance' involving His ıdgement on the heathen.

7. He made known: Heb. 'He continually made known' mpf. tense).

his ways: not those in which God commands men to walk, ut His modes of action: the parallel expression **his doings** has ie same meaning.

children of Israel: we should say Israelites in English: e on lxxxix. 6.

8. full of compassion and gracious: Heb. 'very compasonate and very gracious.' The adjectives are intensive in form. This verse is taken with unimportant alterations from Exod. xiv. 6.

Slow to anger = 'longsuffering.'

9. See Isa. lvii. 16; Jer. iii. 12. This verse is an echo of the mer.

chide: i. e. 'contend.' There are times when the long-

Neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.
10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
11 For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
13 Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the LORD pitieth them that fear him.
14 For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.
15 As for man, his days are as grass;

---

suffering God has to seem to be in conflict with His people: but that time comes to an end.

Neither will he keep *his anger*, &c.: 'his anger' is not in the Hebrew, and we should probably render, 'Nor for ever will He keep strict watch'; so Kay. See Jer. iii. 5, 12; Neh. i. 2; Job xiii. 27.

10. See Ezra ix. 13.

sins: though according to etymology the Hebrew word means 'a missing the mark' as the Greek word *hamartia*, yet in usage it is specially used for sin as guilt, as deserving and involving punishment: see li. 7; Deut. xv. 9, xxi. 22, xxiv. 16, &c. For **iniquities** see on verse 3.

11. For **toward** read 'above,' changing one letter for another like it. Render 11^b: 'So high is His lovingkindness above (the merits of) those who fear Him.' So Hupfeld, &c.

12. See Isa. xxxviii. 17; Mic. vii. 19.

east: *lit.* sunrise: **west:** *lit.* sunset.

transgressions: or, according to the root idea, 'rebellions': but it is the guilt or penalty that the word here imports, as in v. 11, xix. 14, lix. 4.

13-18. *Man frail and transitory, but Jehovah's lovingkindness everlasting.*

14. our frame: the noun is that derived from the verb used in Gen. ii. 7, 'And Jehovah God *formed* man of the dust of the ground,' and there is a reference here to that passage. He knows that we are made out of dust, and that we have the marks of our low origin—'of the earth earthy.'

15. See xc. 5 ff.; Isa. xl. 6 ff.; Job xiv. 2.

man: not man in his frailty: 'man at his best' would be

As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; 16
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, 17
And his righteousness unto children's children ;
To such as keep his covenant, 18
And to those that remember his precepts to do them.
The LORD hath established his throne in the heavens ; 19
And his kingdom ruleth over all.
Bless the LORD, ye angels of his : 20
Ye mighty in strength, that fulfil his word,
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.

---

nearer the original : the Hebrew word is the poetical equivalent of man = Latin *vir* : see on xc. 3. The word means perhaps 'man as a sociable being,' from a root in Arabic = 'to be sociable.'

as grass : so few.

he flourisheth : better, keeping the noun form, 'so he flowers.' Man 'flowers like a flower,' i. e. soon to fade away. His time of full maturity is but short at best.

16. Render : 'For the wind passes through it (the flower), and it is gone ; so his (man's) place knows him no more.'

The east wind is very dry and blighting in Palestine.

16 is taken from Job vii. 10.

The place where man lives is personified : it has no further acquaintance with him. The place and the man are utterly and for ever strangers. In Arabic poems, as in Wordsworth's *Excursion*, sad thoughts are awakened by the remembrance of former occupants of deserted abodes.

18. See Exod. xx. 3.

19–22. *Since Jehovah is universal King* (19), *He should receive universal praise* (20 ff.).

19. Jehovah has made firm His throne in heaven, where are none of those commotions which overturn kings and kingdoms. This verse contains the reason for the exhortations in the following verses.

20–22. The celestial beings of varying grades and functions are called upon to praise God. First, the angels are named as being highest ; they are represented as mighty heroes, and as executing His commands. Then follow His hosts, the subordinate members

21 Bless the LORD, all ye his hosts;
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
22 Bless the LORD, all ye his works,
In all places of his dominion:
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

104 Bless the LORD, O my soul.

---

of the company that wait upon God. Then in verse 23 the works of nature are commanded to join in the chorus.

Translate verses 20 f. as follows:

'Bless Jehovah ye His angels,
Mighty heroes, who execute His command (word),
Listening to the voice of His command (word).
Bless Jehovah all ye His hosts, ministrants of His, who do His will.'

PSALM CIV.

Theme. Jehovah's goodness as revealed in the creation of the world calls for praise.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's majesty as displayed in nature (verses 1–4).

(2) The creation of the earth. The separation of land and water (verses 5–9).

(3) Springs and brooks created: the earth then yields food for man and beast (verses 10–18).

(4) Creation of sun, moon and stars (verses 19–23).

(5) Expression of wonder at the variety of God's works, and the wisdom they show (verse 24).

(6) Description of the sea and its occupants (verses 25–30).

(7) Conclusion: praises and vows (verses 31–35).

The author in this Psalm gives a charming and highly poetical version of the creation-story as told in Gen. i, ii. 3, drawing also upon Deuteronomy, Isa. xl ff., Job, and other Psalms. In Ps. ciii Jehovah is praised for the love He has revealed in the facts of history: in this Psalm for what He has revealed of His character in the creation and sustenance of the universe.

Though this Psalm has much in it that recalls the cosmogonies of other ancient nations, notably the Babylonian creation-myth, it stands apart from other nature poems of non-biblical religions by the ruling place which it gives to the one only God, and the exalted view which it contains of His character.

Hebrew Cosmology (see *Genesis*, Century Bible [Bennett], p. 68). According to Hebrew conceptions the universe is a large

O Lord my God, thou art very great;
Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.
Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; 2

---

house made by, and primarily for, Jehovah, having three stories; heaven (the upper), earth (the middle) and Sheol (the lowest). The firmament is a solid vault (in Homer of bronze and of iron), serving for earth's covering and heaven's basement (Exod. xxiv. 10); it rests on pillars which are fixed on the earth (Job xxvi. 11). Above this firmament are the waters corresponding to the subterranean watery abyss (Gen. i. 7); on these upper waters dwell Jehovah and superhuman beings of varying grades (ciii. 19 ff.). Within the earth, but lower down than man's abode, is Sheol. Underneath the earth is the abyss of waters on which the earth was supposed to rest; see xxiv. 2, cxxxv. 6, cxxxvi. 6; Gen. i. 6 f., vii. 11; Exod. xx. 4.

It is a strong and striking testimony to the divinity of Israel's religion, that though the nation's conception of the universe was so naïve and childish, its thoughts of God were on the highest plane. The religious elevation of the present Psalm is quite inexplicable, unless we allow this simple folk to have been specially guided from above.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The resemblances between Pss. ciii and civ have led most authors to trace both to a common author. The present Psalm has manifest marks of late date in the use made of other Scripture, and in particular of the Priestly Document of he Pentateuch (P).

The variety of verbal forms (perf., partic.) and of persons are ue to a lively and rich imagination, such as shows itself in similar way in Arabic poetry.

1–4. *Jehovah's majesty in creation.*

1. thou art very great: render: 'Thou didst show thyself very reat.'

art clothed: render: 'didst clothe thyself.'

2–4. *Creation of light* (Gen. i. 3–5), *and of the heavens* (Gen. i. –8).

2. Who coverest thyself with light: better, 'Who didst over,' or 'Who coveredst': and so with the other verbs in erses 1–4. In Hebrew they are participles, and take on the nse of the verbs in verse 1. **Light** was created on the first day, ut it was the light that is not seen on sea or land, the light in hich God dwells (Gen. i. 3): the sun, &c. were created to supply e other light.

Note the different treatment of the facts of creation here and in enesis. In the history God made light; in the poem He puts on Him as a royal garment.

Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :
3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ;
Who maketh the clouds his chariot ;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind :
4 Who maketh winds his messengers ;
His ministers a flaming fire :
5 Who laid the foundations of the earth,

See how sharply Jehovah is distinguished from the light, perhaps as a polemic against Zoroastrianism, which says 'God is light' or 'fire'; see 1 Tim. vi. 16; 1 John i. 5.

Who stretchest: better, 'who didst stretch,' or 'who stretchedst.' The earth is compared with a tent, its covering being the firmament; see Isa. xl. 22.

3. Render: 'who lays the beams (= framework) of His chambers (= dwelling) on the waters,' &c.

chambers: *lit.* 'upper (rooms).' The word is used for the room built on the flat roofs of oriental houses, sometimes slept in (1 Kings xvii. 19-23; 2 Kings iv. 10), but generally used for social purposes in the cool of the evening. Jehovah's abode is a kind of upper room to the earth. The plural **chambers** is parallel to 'house' in Jer. xxii. 13 f., and in the latter and present passages has that sense: i. e. the house made up of rooms.

Jehovah's many (upper)-roomed house is based on the waters above the firmament, as the earth rests on the waters below. Another conception seems to have floated before the minds of Bible writers, according to which God's throne and dwelling are immediately on the solid firmament: see Exod. xxiv. 10; Ezek. i. 26; cf. Amos ix. 9.

Who maketh the clouds his chariot: see Isa. xix. 1.

Who walketh upon the wings of the wind: see xviii. 11. Probably some mythological allusions lie in these words; but the general meaning is clear: the forces of nature are subject to His will: see next verse. Superhuman beings are often thought of in ancient mythology as having wings; see on xci. 4.

4. Render:

'Who makes winds His messengers,
And flaming (or blazing) fire His ministers.'

fire: the lightning is meant; the Hebrew word has no plural or it would probably have been used: **winds** and lightning are personified.

5. The earth firmly established; see Job xxxviii. 6; Prov. viii. 29.

That it should not be moved for ever.
Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a vesture; 6
The waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled; 7
At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away;
They went up by the mountains, they went down by the 8
valleys,
Unto the place which thou hadst founded for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; 9

By the **pillars** nothing in particular is indicated: they stand in a general way for God's means of supporting the world.

In the controversy with Galileo this verse was much quoted.

6–9. *The earth separated from the ocean which covered it.* The language of this section is suggested by the ancient Babylonian creation-myth, not by the account of the Deluge in Genesis.

The Hebrew word for deep, *Tehom*, is the same word as that used in Babylonian (*Tiamat*) for the sea monster, the Rahab, the Leviathan as it is variously called. See on lxxiv. 13 f., and on lxxxvii. 3.

In verses 6–9 the tenses of the verbs are carefully chosen and re strikingly suggestive. The two verbs describing God's acts re perfect, with an historical (aorist) meaning: 'Thou *coveredst* t' (the earth) (verse 6), '(the place which) thou *foundedst*' verse 8), 'Thou didst set a bound' (verse 9). All the other erbs are imperfects, expressing the continued operation of natural gents; 'the waters were standing' (verse 6), 'fleeing,' 'hurrying way in alarm' (verse 7), 'the mountains were rising' (verse), &c.

Verses 8 and 9 seem to have changed places; verse 9 refers to ne waters of verse 7 and not to the mountains of verse 8. A opyist is probably responsible for the error.

6. The all-pervading ocean is here conceived of as *due* to God, nd not, as in the Babylonian myth, as *defying* God; but see erse 7.

7. At thy rebuke: this word suggests that the waters were nce disobedient.

the voice of thy thunder: rather, 'Thy thunder-like voice.'

8. This verse says what took place after God had set for the ater the bounds beyond which they should not pass (verse 9). seems evident that this verse should follow verse 9.

They went up, &c.: render: 'The mountains rose, the lleys sank to the place' &c.

That they turn not again to cover the earth.
10 He sendeth forth springs into the valleys;
They run among the mountains:
11 They give drink to every beast of the field;
The wild asses quench their thirst.
12 By them the fowl of the heaven have their habitation,
They sing among the branches.
13 He watereth the mountains from his chambers:
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

10-18. *Springs and brooks created.*

10. He sendeth, &c.: better, 'who sends.'

The Genesis account of Creation is silent as to the making of **springs.** After the dry land (earth) was separated from the 'waters under the heaven,' God commanded the earth to put forth grass (third day): see Gen. i. 9-13. The Psalmist thinks of the springs as made before the rain (verse 13) and as having an existence independent of the rain. It is poetry, not science, that we have here.

valleys: rather, 'wadies': valleys like Kedron into which torrents flow in the winter, but which are quite dry in the summer. The same Hebrew word is used for the torrent as well as for its channel.

Ewald and others render: 'Who sends forth springs into torrents (or brooks).' But 'torrent beds' are probably meant here.

Nothing is said in the Psalm about rivers, because Palestine has but one river—the Jordan, and that is too rapid and deep to be of much immediate service to man or beast.

11. No mention is made of man's quenching his thirst at these torrents, because this is a poem and not a scientific treatise. Perhaps the omission is due to the fact that man quenches his thirst otherwise, as from springs direct, by means of wine, &c.

12. Birds make their home and sing their songs in the branches of trees that grow beside the wadies.

By them: i. e. the torrents, not, as Baethgen thinks, 'by' or 'besides the wild asses,' though LXX, Jero. support this last.

sing: Heb. 'give forth (their) voice.'

branches: better, 'foliage'; LXX has 'rocks.'

13. Jehovah in his abode (see on verse 3) causes the rain to descend from the waters above the firmament. The **chambers** are God's dwelling, not rain reservoirs.

is satisfied with: or 'has its fill from.'

the fruit of thy works: i. e. rain thought of as the issue or product of God's work (sing. not pl. 'works,' though Hebrew can

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, 14
And herb for the service of man;
That he may bring forth food out of the earth:
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, 15
And oil to make his face to shine,
And bread that strengtheneth man's heart.
The trees of the LORD are satisfied; 16

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mean either). Delitzsch and Kirkpatrick think that vegetation is meant, but this is mentioned in the next verse, and parallelism shows that rain is here intended.

The text of verses 14 f. has become somewhat confused. I suggest such changes as will justify the following rendering—they have to do mainly with the rearrangement of words: 'Who causes grass to grow for cattle, and herbage for man's use: so as to bring forth out of the earth bread that supports man's heart, and wine that gladdens man's heart, and oil that makes (the) face shine.' Nothing is said about God's providing flesh-food for man: in the East it is still seldom eaten.

14. See Gen. i. 11.

herb: the Hebrew word embraces all products of the earth except large trees (verse 16): here it includes wheat (bread), the vine (wine), and the olive-tree (oil) which, as a small tree, is subsumed under 'herbs.'

for the service (=use) **of man:** the Hebrew can mean 'as a reward for man's labour.' Some take the words to mean (herbs) 'that man may labour for' (=to produce) 'them.'

food: Heb. 'bread.' The three main products of Palestine are named: (1) wheat for bread; (2) the vine, yielding wine; and (3) the olive-tree, which supplies valuable food (olive berries and oil) and a most refreshing cosmetic (oil).

15. wine: seldom used now in Palestine, as the Quran condemns its use. Coffee is the commonest beverage, moca coffee, sugarless and milkless.

oil: olive oil is meant—the head was cooled and the body refreshed by having this oil applied.

to make his face to shine: read, 'which' (the oil) 'makes,' &c. Oil poured on the head runs down the cheeks and thus makes the face shine.

And bread, &c.: this clause has its right place at the close of verse 14: see my translation above. Pliny says that two liquids are most gratifying to men's bodies: oil—without, and wine—within.

16. The trees of the LORD: render, 'large trees': see on lxxx. 11.

The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;
17 Where the birds make their nests:
As for the stork, the fir trees are her house.
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
The rocks are a refuge for the conies.
19 He appointed the moon for seasons:
The sun knoweth his going down.
20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night;
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
21 The young lions roar after their prey,

---

are satisfied: or 'have their fill,' have what they need, here rain (see on verse 13).

17. birds: the Hebrew word = 'small birds,' such as the sparrow.

stork: the Hebrew word = 'loving,' 'kind'; it is thought to be so called on account of its affection for its young. Classical writers have often pointed out this characteristic.

18. After noticing the tall trees in which birds dwell (16 f.), the Psalmist passes naturally to the high mountains on which animals make their home.

wild goats: *lit.* 'climbers': render, 'mountain goats.'

The rocks: Heb. 'crags.'

conies: neither rabbits nor conies are meant, for the animals here spoken of dwell among rocks (see also Prov. xxx. 26).

19-23. *Creation of the heavenly bodies. The work of the fourth day* (Gen. i. 14).

19. The ancients measured time by the phases of the moon much more than we do, as clocks and watches were unknown to them. The moon is named before the sun because the Hebrews began the day with the evening.

The sun knoweth: we must alter the Hebrew word slightly, and render, 'He makes the sun know.'

going down: *lit.* 'going in.' We speak of 'sunrise' and 'sunset': the Hebrews spoke of 'going out' and 'entering in'—the latter pair having a mythological origin.

20. Render: 'When darkness comes on, it is night, In which every beast of the forest creeps (forth).'

The second person, 'thou makest,' &c. is quite unsuitable here: the very same form of the verb is used as a feminine to express the occurrence of natural phenomena ('it rains,' 'snows,' &c.). The feminine expresses the neuter in Semitic because, as in Keltic, no distinct neuter exists.

21. The roar of the lion is, to God, a prayer.

And seek their meat from God.
The sun ariseth, they get them away, 22
And lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his work 23
And to his labour until the evening.
O LORD, how manifold are thy works! 24
In wisdom hast thou made them all:
The earth is full of thy riches.
Yonder is the sea, great and wide, 25
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
Both small and great beasts.

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22. Render: 'When the sun arises, they retreat, Go to their lairs and stretch themselves in them.'

And lay, &c.: the Hebrew expression is pregnant, its force being brought out in the above translation. In Durham and other English counties one often hears 'He is into the house' ('into 't 'oos').

23. work: skilled labour is probably meant.

labour: tilling the land is what seems intended.

24. The variety of Jehovah's works and the wisdom they display.

riches: the Hebrew word means here, 'what God has created': so = 'creatures' (as R.Vm.).

25-30. *The sea and its occupants.*

25. Render: 'Yonder is the sea, great and wide on both sides, Wherein are moving' (*lit.* 'creeping') 'things innumerable: Living creatures, alike small and great.'

Yonder: the rendering 'this . . . sea,' favoured by LXX, Jero. and defended by Delitzsch and Cheyne ⁽¹⁾, is excluded by the Hebrew.

wide: Heb. 'wide on both hands,' i. e. extending far to the right and to the left. See Gen. xxxiv. 21, &c.

If with Dean Stanley we think of the author as writing the present Psalm on Mount Lebanon, these words and other allusions would be very suitable: 'Yonder—before me—is the Mediterranean Sea' (the only sea known to most Israelites) 'great and stretching out far to the right (north) and to the left (south).'

small and great beasts: translate: 'great and small living creatures. The Hebrew word rendered 'beasts' means first of all 'a living thing,' then 'a wild beast,' in contrast with domesticated animals or cattle (*behemah*).

26 There go the ships;
There is leviathan, whom thou hast formed to take his pastime therein.
27 These wait all upon thee,
That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.
28 That thou givest unto them they gather;
Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good.
29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled;
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created;
And thou renewest the face of the ground.
31 Let the glory of the Lord endure for ever;

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26. In verse 25 we are told what was *in* the sea—'innumerable moving creatures.' In this verse the poet tells us what could be seen *above* the sea, viz. ships and whales: the whale is undoubtedly meant by **leviathan.** He is often as conspicuous on the face of the Mediterranean as the craft.

to take his pastime therein: this rendering is grammatically possible, and is supported by Job xl. 20. But Job xli. 5 (in the Heb. xl. 29) and the connexion favour R.Vm. '(which thou hast formed) to play with him.' It is God's power that is magnified. He is so wonderful in might that He plays with the sea monster as men do with animal pets.

27 f. is based on Gen. i. 29 f. (sixth day).

In verses 28–30 the sentences are all conditional, though, as often in Hebrew, the conditional particles are lacking.

28. Render: '(What) Thou givest to them, they gather: When Thou openest Thy hand, they get their fill of good (things).'

29. The hiding of God's face means the withdrawal of His care; see Job xxxiv. 15, &c.

30. The bodily part of man is ignored as comparatively unimportant; His life is a result of the Divine breathing forth. The conception is of course theocentric and poetical.

thou renewest: after the death of winter thou makest the land to swarm with new life.

31–35. *Prayers, praises and vows, put together from various sources, and standing in loose connexion.* The author in these verses returns to the thoughts with which he set out, a procedure followed in other Psalms of the kind: see xlv. 17, lxxii. 17, &c.

Let the Lord rejoice in his works:
Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; 32
He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.
I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: 33
I will sing praise to my God while I have any being.
Let my meditation be sweet unto him: 34
I will rejoice in the Lord.
Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, 35
And let the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Praise ye the Lord.

O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name 105

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31. Let the LORD rejoice in his works: an allusion to Gen. i. 3; cf. Prov. viii. 31.

32. A mere glance from God causes earthquake: see Exod. xix. 18; Amos ix. 5. His touch turns the mountain into a volcano.

Perhaps some recent earthquake gave force and vividness to the words in 32^a when written.

33 = cxlvi. 2 (with hardly any difference). Note the underlying thought: once men are dead there is an end of all praising. This Psalmist knows nothing of the heaven of the Apocalypse with its harps and hallelujahs.

34. sweet: 'acceptable,' 'pleasing,' see xix. 15. The word rendered 'sweet' is used of an acceptable sacrifice: see Jer. vi. 20; Hos. ix. 4.

35. Render: 'So that all men may unite in one song of praise to Jehovah, let sinners (= the wicked) be entirely removed out of the earth.' That would have been a great removing which issued in leaving on the earth those only who, at that time, bowed the knee to Jehovah alone.

At the close of Ps. cxxxix (which resembles the present Psalm in many features) there is also a prayer that Jehovah may execute vengeance on the wicked: see on cxxxix. 19 ff.

Praise ye the LORD: Heb. 'Hallelujah,' i. e. 'Praise ye Jah' (*Yah*). See for 'Jah' on lxxxix. 8 and for 'Hallelujah' on 'Hallelujah Psalms,' p. 226.

Psalm CV.

Theme. Jehovah to be praised for his faithfulness to Israel in the past.

Make known his doings among the peoples.

I. *Title.* The Hebrew has none. In the LXX 'Hallelujah' acts as title to this Psalm, instead of being attached to Ps. civ. This is no doubt its proper place, the 'Hallelujah' with which the present Psalm closes being that with which Ps. cvi begins, repeated by mistake. Probably 'Hallelujah' was the rallying word uttered by the precentor or by some one specially appointed when a Psalm was about to be sung. A modern choir-leader would strike his baton for the same purpose.

II. *Contents.* (1) The summoning of the people to praise Jehovah (verses 1-6) for His fidelity to the covenant made by Him with the fathers (verses 7-11).

(2) Jehovah's care over the patriarchs during their migrations in Canaan and in Egypt (verses 12-22).

(3) His protection of His people when the Egyptians oppressed them (verses 23-36).

(4) His goodness in delivering Israel in Egypt, in providing for them in the wilderness, and in bringing them safely to the promised land (verses 37-45).

Noteworthy in this Psalm is the prominence given to the residence in Egypt and to the Joseph tribe. This last at least suggests north Israel influence.

This is the first of the group of 'Hodu Psalms' (Pss. cv-cvii), so called because they open with *hodu* = 'O give thanks.'

III. *Authorship and Date.* Pss. cv and cvi are older than Chronicles (i. e. than B. C. 250), since parts of both Psalms are appropriated as part of a Psalm ascribed to David in 1 Chron. xvi. It is only the desire to make the Psalm Maccabean that led Hitzig to regard verses 1-15 of the present Psalm as an extract from 1 Chron. xvi, and Duhm to deny the genuineness of 1 Chron. xvi. 8-36. On the other hand, the universalism of the Psalm, its looking back to the past for encouragement, the use made of other Scriptures, especially of the Priestly Code (say B. C. 450), and some Aramaisms (see verse 18) show that the Psalm is late.

The prosperous days of Nehemiah's time would suit the Psalm, but so would many other periods.

Pss. lxxviii and cvi are also retrospective, but the burden of these songs is the unfaithfulness of Israel in the past. In the present Psalm it is the Divine goodness which is alone recalled.

The Pentateuch, or rather Hexateuch, sources, J (or JE) and P, are both used by our Psalmist.

Verses 1-15 occur in 1 Chron. xvi. 8-22.

1-6. *Praise to be given to Jehovah.*

1. This verse is loaned from Isa. xii. 4.

Sing unto him, sing praises unto him; 2
Talk ye of all his marvellous works.
Glory ye in his holy name: 3
Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.
Seek ye the LORD and his strength; 4
Seek his face evermore.
Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; 5
His wonders, and the judgements of his mouth;
O ye seed of Abraham his servant, 6
Ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

---

give thanks: the Hebrew word (*lit.* 'to hurl,' 'throw') means both 'to give thanks to' and 'to praise': see on xcv. 2.

call upon his name: this does not mean 'to pray,' but 'to celebrate the attributes of God': 'to bear witness to God's revealed character': see Exod. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5 f.: cf. Deut. xxxii. 3.

2. sing praises: the Hebrew can mean, and probably does here mean, 'play' (on the harp or lyre); 'make melody' would preserve the ambiguity of the Hebrew. But probably two different things are meant by the two verbs in 2^a.

his marvellous works: see on xcvi. 3.

3. See Isa. xli. 16.

his holy name = 'His holy character.'

4. seek: the first Hebrew verb is the one used for seeking nowledge: it is cognate with 'midrash'; the second is used of eeking for something that is lost. Perhaps the parallelism is lone responsible for the employment of two verbs here, the same dea being intended by both.

5. Remember: a command occurring fifteen times in Deuteroomy.

marvellous works: see on xcvi. 3.

His wonders: the same Hebrew word is used of the plagues Egypt: Exod. vii. 3, xi. 9; Joshua iii. 3.

the judgements of his mouth: i. e. the judicial verdicts ronounced by Him regarding the Egyptians: Exod. vi. 6, vii. 4, i. 12.

6. Abraham: in 1 Chron. xvi. 13 'Israel.'

his servant: referring to Abraham: see on lxxviii. 70. But e should probably read 'servants' (plural) as in the LXX and arg. (not the Pesh. as Baethgen mistakenly says), and as in the XX of 1 Chron. xvi. 13. 'His servants' would then be parallel **his chosen ones.**

7 He is the LORD our God:
His judgements are in all the earth.
8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever,
The word which he commanded to a thousand generations;
9 *The covenant* which he made with Abraham,
And his oath unto Isaac;
10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute,
To Israel for an everlasting covenant:
11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,

7–11. *Jehovah's faithfulness to His covenant.*

7. He is the LORD our God: render: 'He, Jehovah, is our God.'

His judgements: same meaning as in verse 5: but here their sphere is enlarged, for all the world is now included.

8. hath remembered: better, 'remembers.' In Hebrew mental operations are conceived as states which continue.

his covenant: referring to Gen. xv. 18, xvii. 24; Exod. xxiv. Here it is the Divine side of the transaction that is thought of: the promises made conditionally by God. The conception of a covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel is not older than the Deuteronomic legislation, say B.C. 620.

commanded: rather, 'confirmed,' the original sense of the Hebrew word. So in Exod. xviii. 23.

to a thousand generations: belongs to 'He remembers,' and is parallel to **for ever.** 'Thousand' means here a large number.

9. (which he) **made:** Heb. 'cut.' In Hebrew as in Latin (*ferire, icĕre*), and partly in Greek (*temno horkia*), to 'cut a covenant' is the idiom, because a covenant was ratified by a sacrifice: see Gen. xv

his oath unto Isaac: Gen. xxvi. 3: the phrase depends on 'He remembers.'

10. And confirmed the same: render: 'and which (covenant) He appointed.'

unto Jacob: see Gen. xxviii. 13, xxxv. 9.

a statute: a fixed, unchangeable decree.

Jacob: Israel: though these two names are identical in the later history they were originally distinct, each with a cluster of separate traditions, all which are united in the Jacob or Israel of the later literature. The traditional (J) explanation of the double name is given in Gen. xxxii. 26–28.

11. The words of the promise are quoted.

The lot of your inheritance:
When they were but a few men in number; 12
Yea, very few, and sojourners in it;
And they went about from nation to nation, 13
From one kingdom to another people.
He suffered no man to do them wrong; 14
Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;
Saying, Touch not mine anointed ones, 15
And do my prophets no harm.

The lot of your inheritance: render: 'the land of your inheritance,' and see on lxxviii. 55.

The covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob embraced in its reach their descendants.

12–22. *How God guided the patriarchs in their wanderings.*

12. When they were: the 'they' refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; hardly, however, as individuals, but as representing peoples. Amos used the words Isaac, Jacob, and Israel invariably as names of tribes or peoples.

but a few men in number: *lit.* 'men of number,' i. e. men that could be numbered = 'few.' Cf. Horace, 'Nos numerus sumus.' See Gen. xxxiv, Deut. xxvi. 5. For the antithetic phrase innumerable (Heb. 'without number') see Ps. xl. 12, &c. These words show that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob cannot here denote the individuals so called, for it would not be said of them that they were **few men in number**: they were but three, and these three were not alive at the same time.

sojourners: Heb. *ger*: see on cxix. 19.

13. Render: 'And when they were going about,' &c.; a continuation of the conditional sentence in verse 12: the apodosis is in verses 14 f.

14. he reproved kings: referring to Sarah and Rebecca and he way they were rescued from Pharaoh and Abimelech; see Gen. xii. 7, xx. 3, 7, 18, xxvi. 11.

15. Touch not, &c.: an allusion to Gen. xxvi. 11.

mine anointed ones: the Hebrew is the word rendered Messiah'; 'my messiahs.' Kings and priests were set apart for heir office by the anointing of oil. The fathers of the nation were called apart to be themselves consecrated and the founders f a consecrated people: see on lxxxix. 20, and see also pp. 7 f.

prophets: Abraham is called a prophet in Gen. xx. 7 (E); ut, as applied to Amos, Isaiah, &c., the word has a different

16 And he called for a famine upon the land;
He brake the whole staff of bread.
17 He sent a man before them;
Joseph was sold for a servant:
18 His feet they hurt with fetters;
He was laid in *chains of* iron:
19 Until the time that his word came to pass;

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meaning. Here the sense is simply that God revealed Himself through Abraham.

16–22. *What led Jacob into Egypt* (*the famine*). *Joseph's history briefly and poetically treated.*

16. In Hebrew co-ordination of sentences is used where subordination of ideas is meant, and where in other languages subordination would be expressed. This is evident to the reader of the English Bible. We might translate verse 16: 'So when He called,' &c.

he called: a common expression in the O.T.; see 2 Kings viii. 1; Amos v. 8, vii. 4, ix. 6; Hag. i. 11.

staff of bread: a case of what is called 'Genitive of apposition'; the bread *is* the staff: that which men lean on; see Lev. xxvi. 26; Isa. iii. 1; Ps. civ. 15.

17. See Gen. xlv. 5, 7.

a man: i. e. Joseph.

servant: better, 'a bondservant' or 'slave,' though the latter includes too much.

18. All we are told in Gen. xl. 3 with reference to Joseph's incarceration is that he was 'bound' in the prison. The details given in this verse are probably due to the poet's transference of prison conditions, as he knew them, to the imprisonment of Joseph.

He was laid in *chains of* iron: *lit.* 'His soul' (= He himself) 'entered the iron' (= irons). 'Iron,' though singular, has a plural meaning, in harmony with Hebrew usage. It is in parallelism with the Hebrew word for **fetters**, which is also singular in the original. Hence it = 'iron fetters,' 'chains,' or the like. 'He entered the iron chains or fetters' = 'he was bound by them,' or 'in them.'

The rendering 'the iron entered his soul' (so LXX, Targ., most Jewish and many Christian exegetes) is excluded by grammar and sense.

19. word: the second of the two Hebrew nouns so translated in this verse denotes especially a Divine utterance, command, or promise. **His word** means Joseph's interpretation of his own dreams.

The word of the Lord tried him.
The king sent and loosed him; 20
Even the ruler of peoples, and let him go free.
He made him lord of his house, 21
And ruler of all his substance:
To bind his princes at his pleasure, 22
And teach his senators wisdom.
Israel also came into Egypt; 23
And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
And he increased his people greatly, 24
And made them stronger than their adversaries.
He turned their heart to hate his people, 25

The word of the LORD means the same thing, for it was Jehovah who gave Joseph the interpretation.

tried him: Jehovah's word to Joseph called for faith, and so ested him.

20. The king sent, &c.: see Gen. xli. 14.

loosed: Heb. 'set free.'

21. See xli. 40, xlv. 8.

22. Render: 'That he might instruct princes according to his ood pleasure, And impart wisdom to his elders.'

bind: read, 'instruct,' changing one Hebrew consonant. his is supported by parallelism, LXX, Jero., and Duhm.

at his pleasure: read, with LXX, Jero., 'according to his leasure': two very similar letters (*b* and *k*) are confounded here s elsewhere.

wisdom: see Gen. xli. 39.

23-25. *How God protected the Israelites in Egypt.*

23. Mizraim (= Egypt) and Ham stand in parallelism here as lxxviii. 51. In verse 27 Egypt is called the land of Ham. ccording to Gen. x. 6 Mizraim is son of Ham; another son is ush (Ethiopia): proof surely that the names in Gen. x are ibal, not individual; see on verse 12.

Israel = Jacob; see on verse 10.

24. And he: i. e. Jehovah.

than their adversaries: read, 'stronger than the Egyptians.'

25-39 is based on Exod. i-xiv.

25. He turned their heart: render: 'their heart turned.' The ebrew verb has often, as in lxxviii. 9 and here, an intransitive eaning. For the sentiment see Exod. i. 8.

To deal subtilly with his servants.
26 He sent Moses his servant,
And Aaron whom he had chosen.
27 They set among them his signs,
And wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and made it dark;
And they rebelled not against his words.
29 He turned their waters into blood,
And slew their fish.
30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
In the chambers of their kings.

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27. They set: read with the ancient versions (except Targ.) and with most moderns 'He set': see lxxviii. 43; Exod. x. 2.

From verse 24 to verse 37 Jehovah is the subject.

among them: as in Exod. x. 2: but in lxxviii. 43 'in Egypt.'

his signs: Heb. 'words or things of His signs,' i.e. 'instances of His signs'; then virtually 'some of His signs.' This noun has the same idiomatic sense in lxv. 4, cxxxvii. 2, cxlv. 5, and Jer. v. 28 ('deeds of wickedness').

wonders: see on verse 5.

28–36 *gives an account of the plagues, but only eight are mentioned, and these not in chronological order.*

The fifth plague (pestilence) and the sixth (boils) are omitted: the remaining eight are alluded to in the following order:—

(1) The ninth (darkness). (2) The first (Nile water changed into blood). (3) The second (frogs). (4) The fourth (flies). (5) The third (lice). (6) The seventh (hail). (7) The eighth (locusts). (8) The tenth (death of firstborn).

28. darkness: the ninth plague (Exod. x. 21 ff.). Here it is named first.

And they rebelled not: render, 'Yet they rebelled,' omitting the negative as LXX, Pesh. Or read with Hitzig, &c., 'And they kept not His words.'

29. We have in this verse an account of the first plague, the turning of the Nile water into blood: see Exod. vii. 14 ff., 21 (J, E).

He turned: the verb used in verse 25 (see); here used transitively.

30. The second plague (frogs), Exod. viii. 1 ff. (J).

Render 30^{b}: '(They went up into) the chambers,' &c. The words in brackets have probably fallen out, and are needed for the rhythm and the sense. See Exod. viii. 3.

He spake, and there came swarms of flies, 31
And lice in all their borders.
He gave them hail for rain, 32
And flaming fire in their land.
He smote their vines also and their fig trees; 33
And brake the trees of their borders.
He spake, and the locust came, 34
And the cankerworm, and that without number,
And did eat up every herb in their land, 35
And did eat up the fruit of their ground.
He smote also all the firstborn in their land, 36
The chief of all their strength.

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31. Two plagues are referred to in this verse, viz. the fourth plague (gadflies: see lxxviii. 45, and Exod. viii. 20 ff. (J)) and the third (lice: see Exod. viii. 16 ff. (P)).

swarms of flies: render: 'the dog fly': see on lxxviii. 45.

lice: render, 'gnats,' or 'stinging flies.' This plague is unmentioned in lxxviii.

32 f. The seventh plague (hail): see lxxviii. 47 f., and Exod. ix. 3 ff., 25 f. (J).

32. rain: Egypt had no rain: it has a little now.

flaming fire: the lightning accompanying the hail storm: see xod. ix. 24.

34 f. The eighth plague (locusts): see lxxviii. 46; Exod. x. ff. (J).

34. locust: the Hebrew word is that used in lxxviii. 46 and xod. x. 4, and so translated.

cankerworm: nothing other than the locust is meant. Two ords are used here for locust as in lxxviii. 51; in both cases r the sake of the parallelism.

35. did eat up: the same verb occurs twice in Hebrew by istake. Omitting one consonant (Aleph) we have a word which akes an excellent parallel, 'and did destroy': this verb occurs lix. 13, cxix. 87, &c.

36. The tenth plague (death of the firstborn): see Exod. xviii. 51; Ex. xi. 1 ff.

the chief of all their strength: *lit.* 'the beginning' or 'firstuit of all their strength': the same Hebrew words are found in n. iv. 9; Deut. xxi. 17: see on lxxviii. 51.

37 And he brought them forth with silver and gold:
And there was not one feeble person among his tribes.
38 Egypt was glad when they departed;
For the fear of them had fallen upon them.
39 He spread a cloud for a covering;
And fire to give light in the night.
40 They asked, and he brought quails,
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
41 He opened the rock, and waters gushed out;
They ran in the dry places *like* a river.
42 For he remembered his holy word,

37-45. *Jehovah's goodness at the Exodus, and on the journey to Canaan.*

37. with silver and gold: see Exod. xii. 35.

not one feeble person: better, 'not one that stumbled': based on Isa. v. 27.

among his (Jehovah's) **tribes:** see cxxii. 4.

38. See Exod. xii. 31-33.

the fear of them (the Israelites) **had fallen upon them** (the Egyptians): see Exod. xv. 16; Deut. xi. 25.

39-41. *Miracles of the wilderness journey.*

39. See Exod. xiii. 21 f., xiv. 19 f. In Exodus, however, the cloud is a defence between the Israelites and the Egyptians (see especially Exod. xiv. 19): here it shelters them against the scorching rays of the sun: see Isa. iv. 56.

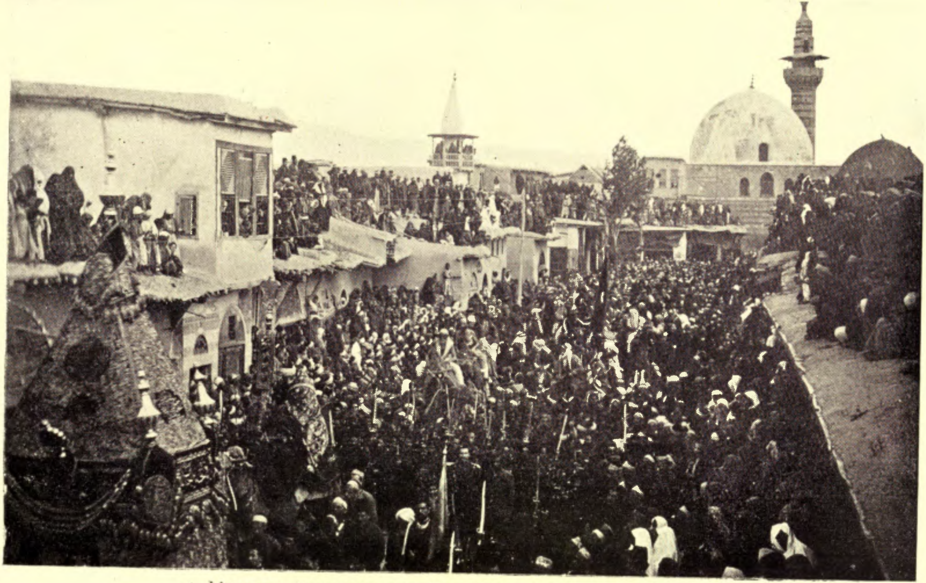
a covering: the Hebrew word may denote something that is vertical (see Exod. xxvii. 16, xxxv. 12), as well as what occupies a horizontal position (2 Sam xvii. 19). If we can think of a cloud standing upright between the Israelites and the Egyptians the apparent contradiction with Exodus disappears.

40. quails: elsewhere mentioned in Exod. xvi. 13 (P) and Num. xi. 31 (J, E).

bread of heaven: i. e. the manna: so lxxviii. 24 f.; Neh. ix. 15; cf. John v. 31; 1 Cor. x. 3.

41. See lxxviii. 20 (note on); Exod. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 11: cf. Isa. xli. 18, xlviii. 21. There is a Jewish tradition that a rock full of fissures, whence issued fresh water, followed the Israelites through the wilderness.

42-45. *The summing up of the whole matter:* verse 42 refers back to verse 8.



A MODERN PILGRIMAGE: THE HAJJ LEAVING DAMASCUS

And Abraham his servant.
And he brought forth his people with joy, 43
And his chosen with singing.
And he gave them the lands of the nations; 44
And they took the labour of the peoples in possession:
That they might keep his statutes, 45
And observe his laws.
Praise ye the Lord.

Praise ye the Lord. 106

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42. ***And* Abraham:** render: ('His holy word' = 'covenant') With Abraham'; so LXX, Jero., Pesh., Targ. The Hebrew can lenote either.

43. with joy (gladness): **with singing** (rather, ringing shouts of oy): reminiscent of Exod. xv, but especially of Isa. xxxv. 10, i. 11, lv. 12, which utter the joy felt at the prospect of deliverince from Babylon.

44. See Deut. vi. 10 f.

labour: the Hebrew word means 'labour itself as such,' and ılso 'what is gained by labour': here it is the latter that is inended.

45. Praise ye the LORD (Heb. *Hallelujah*): omitted in LXX nd Pesh., and rightly: it is inserted from the beginning of the ıext Psalm by a copyist's error.

Psalm CVI.

Theme. Israel's ingratitude and unfaithfulness notwithstanding ehovah's lovingkindness.

I. *Title.* See on verse 1.

II. *Contents.* This Psalm is a retrospect of the nation's past vith a view to pointing out the sins of the fathers. Ps. cv realled the past in order to make mention of the lovingkindness f God. The present Psalm agrees with Ps. lxxviii in that both ave as their dominant note the sins of Israel in times past. Reıembering the idea of national and even of human solidarity vhich had vogue in the ancient world (see on verse 6) it will be een that this confession of the sins of their ancestors involved a onfession of their own guilt. The arrangement of the Psalm is n the whole according to chronology (but see on 32 f.), and it is ifficult to made a logical analysis of the contents. The following ets forth the general course of thought:

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD,
Or shew forth all his praise?
3 Blessed are they that keep judgement,
And he that doeth righteousness at all times.
4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest
unto thy people;

(1) Summons to praise Jehovah: the happiness of those who work righteousness (verses 1–3).

(2) Prayer of the writer for himself (verses 4 f.).

(3) Recital of several sins of which Israel in the wilderness was guilty (verses 6–33).

(4) Sins of which Israel was guilty after reaching Canaan (verses 34–39).

(5) Jehovah's punishment of Israel's sin (verses 40–43).

(6) His remembrance of His covenant and His compassion (verses 44–46).

(7) Prayer for restoration (verse 47).

(8) Closing doxology (editorial) (verse 48).

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cv.

The present Psalm shows dependence on Num. xvi. 35 (P), Job, Isa. xl ff., Ezek. xx, &c., and it has some Aramaisms—a confirmation of the late date inferred on other grounds. But see on verse 17.

1–3. *A call to praise Jehovah.*

1. Praise ye the LORD: Heb. *Hallelujah*; see on 'Hallelujah Psalms,' pp. 226 f., and for 'Jah' ('Yah') see on lxxxix. 8.

This phrase ('Praise ye Yah') is no part of the Psalm itself; see on Ps. cv (*Title*).

The remainder of verse 1 stands also outside the Psalm proper, with which it has no logical connexion. It is a kind of liturgical formula used to introduce Pss. cvi f., cxviii and cxxxvi: it is found also in 1 Chron. xvi. 34 and Jer. xxxiii. 11.

2. See xli. 5.

utter: an Aramaic and late word, suggestive of late date.

his praise: read (with LXX, Pesh., Jero.) 'His praises,' i. e. 'His praiseworthy acts.'

3. Blessed: rather, 'Happy': see on lxxxiv. 4.

judgement: the principle which should regulate the conduct of the judge.

he that doeth: the ancient versions have the plural 'those who do,' &c. This agrees with 3^a.

O visit me with thy salvation:
That I may see the prosperity of thy chosen, 5
That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
That I may glory with thine inheritance.

We have sinned with our fathers, 6
We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; 7
They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies;
But were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

---

4 f. In these verses, according to the M. T., Pesh., Jero., and Targ., the plural is suddenly changed to the singular. It is better, however, with the Greek versions to continue the plural as Duhm does. No change in the Hebrew of verse 5 is necessary for this. If the singular is retained we may regard the verses as a reader's prayer written originally in the margin in the manner of Oriental readers. Ewald thought that the singular is due to the fact that one person had to sing these words.

favour and **salvation** are in parallelism also in Isa. xlix. 8.

5. see: i. e. experience, so lxxxix. 12, &c., cf. John iii. 3. Followed by the preposition found here in Hebrew the verb means especially to look upon with delight; so cxii. 8, &c.

6-33. *Recital of the leading acts of sin, of which, in the wilderness, the Israelites were guilty. Seven such are enumerated.*

6. General confession; see 1 Kings viii. 47; Neh. ix; Dan. ix. 5; Baruch ii.

We have sinned with our fathers: the conception of the solidarity of nations was very great in ancient times. The individual was hardly thought of as such, but only as a part of a larger whole. The so-called federal theology is based on this idea. In a similar way Levi is said to have paid tithes to Melchizedek: i. e. in Abraham. See on cix. 9-15.

We have committed iniquity: the Heb. = 'we have exhibited a perverse character,' 'acted in a crooked way.'

7. Mention of the first sin. Murmuring at the Red Sea.

understood not: gave no heed to; see Deut. xxxii. 28 ff.

multitude of thy mercies: render: 'the abundance of thy lovingkindness': the latter noun is singular in LXX, Aq., Jero., Targ., though in Pesh. it is plural as in the M.T.

But were rebellious, &c.: read, 'And they defied the Most High at the Sea of Suph'; see lxxviii. 56. Very few changes are needed to yield this sense. The M.T. bears on its face the

8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake,
That he might make his mighty power to be known.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up:
So he led them through the depths, as through a wilderness.
10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11 And the waters covered their adversaries:
There was not one of them left.
12 Then believed they his words;
They sang his praise.
13 They soon forgat his works;
They waited not for his counsel:
14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,

---

appearance of corruption. Venema, and most moderns, read as above.

Red Sea: Heb. 'Sea of Reeds': better retain the proper name form of the words 'Yam Suph.' The Red Sea has no reeds growing in it, but only in its neighbourhood. Many therefore locate the Biblical 'Yam Suph' in the low-lying marshy ground, north of the modern Suez. In that case the Red Sea of the LXX, though adopted in the N.T. (Acts vii. 36, &c.), is an inaccurate rendering of the Hebrew. It should be remembered that the Heb. *yam*, the Arabic *bahr*, and the Greek *thalassa* mean not only what we understand by sea, but also a smaller collection of waters, a river (the Nile, &c.), a lake (Dead Sea, &c.), &c.

8. for his name's sake: see Exod. xiv. 19; Ezek. xx. 9.

9. He rebuked: see on civ. 7, and cf. Isa. l. 2.

wilderness: better, 'wild pasture land.'

9b is from Isa. lxiii. 13.

10. redeemed: *ga'al*; see on lxxiv. 2.

11. See Exod. xiv. 28, xv. 5.

12. See Exod. xiv. 31, xv. 1.

13–15. *The second example of Israel's sin. The lust for flesh* (see Num. xi).

13. soon forgat: Heb. 'quickly forgat.'

his counsel: i. e. 'His plan,' or 'purpose.'

14. lusted exceedingly: Heb. 'desired with desire' (accus.); see Luke xxii. 15.

And tempted God in the desert.
And he gave them their request; 15
But sent leanness into their soul.
They envied Moses also in the camp, 16
And Aaron the saint of the LORD.
The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, 17
And covered the company of Abiram.
And a fire was kindled in their company; 18
The flame burned up the wicked.
They made a calf in Horeb, 19

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tempted: 'put to the proof,' 'tested,' because lacking faith in God: not 'tempt' in the modern sense; see lxxviii. 29 f.; Num. xi. 4.

desert: the Hebrew word is almost a proper name for the desert of the wandering, and perhaps for some parts of it, though it comes probably from a root meaning 'to be desolate.' In the Pesh. the word is untranslated: 'Ashimōn' (strictly Ăshsh-) for Heb. *yeshimōn*.

15. leanness: read (with LXX, Pesh., &c.), 'loathing.' They had the food they longed for, but their longing turned to loathing.

their soul: i. e. 'themselves'; see on lxxviii. 18, cvii. 18: 'But sent them' (lit. 'into them') 'loathing.'

16-18. *The third example of their sin.* Under the lead of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram they revolted against Moses and Aaron, i. e. against God; see Num. xvi.

16. the saint of the LORD: render, 'the holy one of Jehovah.'

17. Dathan and **Abiram** are mentioned without Korah as in the older tradition (J, E: see Deut. xi. 6). In a later tradition (P) the name of Korah is added. See G. Buchanan Gray on Num. xvi. 24, 27 and xxvi. 10. The Psalmist follows the older tradition.

18. The reference is to Num. xvi. 35 (P), where it is said that a fire came forth from Jehovah and devoured the two hundred and fifty followers of Korah who offered incense.

19-23. *The fourth example of Israel's sinning in the wilderness: worship of the golden calf* (see Exod. xxxii (E), Deut. ix. 8).

Calf (rather steer) worship was probably taken over from the Canaanites, and not from the Egyptians, since it was a live bull (Apis) that the latter worshipped.

19. calf: render, 'steer,' i. e. a bull calf.

Horeb: the name found in E and D for Sinai (J and P).

And worshipped a molten image.
20 Thus they changed their glory
For the likeness of an ox that eateth grass.
21 They forgat God their saviour,
Which had done great things in Egypt;
22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
And terrible things by the Red Sea.
23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them,
Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach,
To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.
24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land,
They believed not his word;
25 But murmured in their tents,
And hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

---

20. changed: Heb. can mean 'exchanged.'

their glory: if this text is kept, it = 'what they gloried in,' i. e. 'their God': see Deut. iv. 6–8, x. 21. The original reading was 'His (God's) glory'; see Rom. i. 23. So Theod. and some MSS. of the LXX. Rabbinical authority regards this as one of the 'eighteen corrections of the scribes,' holding that 'my glory' stood in the original text. See Ginsburg, *Introd. to the Hebrew Bible*, p. 360.

21 f. They forgot their benefactor.

22. land of Ham: in connexion with Egypt; see on cv. 23, cf. lxxviii. 57.

23. See Exod. xxxii. 10 ff.; Num. xiv. 11 ff.

that he would destroy them: from Deut. ix. 25.

stood . . . in the breach: the figure is that of a breach made in a city wall by an invader: to prevent the enemy from entering, a hero steps into the breach. Moses stood between Israel and Jehovah, averting the anger of the latter from the former; see Jer. xviii. 20; Ezek. xxii. 30.

24–27. *The fifth example of sin.* **In consequence of the unfavourable report of the spies they despised the land promised them. See Num. xiii f.**

24. the pleasant land: the same expression is found in Jer. iii. 19; Zech. vii. 14.

25. murmured, &c. from Deut. i. 27.

Therefore he lifted up his hand unto them, 26
That he would overthrow them in the wilderness:
And that he would overthrow their seed among the nations, 27
And scatter them in the lands.
They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, 28
And ate the sacrifices of the dead.
Thus they provoked him to anger with their doings; 29
And the plague brake in upon them.
Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgement: 30
And so the plague was stayed.

---

26. lifted up his hand: 'He swore.' The same idiom exists in other Semitic languages (Arabic, &c.). When an oath was made the right hand was raised towards God as if calling Him to witness: see Num. xiv. 28 f., 32. Here and in Exod. vi. 8, &c. the same expression is used anthropomorphically of God Himself.

27. Render: 'And that He would scatter their seed' (descendants) 'among the nations' (heathen), 'And disperse them in the land.'

overthrow: read (with LXX), 'disperse,' changing the final consonant of the Hebrew.

28-31. *A sixth sin mentioned: uniting in the worship of the Moabites* (see Num. xxv).

28. They joined themselves: LXX 'They were initiated,' Jero. '*Consecrati sunt*'; both referring perhaps to certain mysteries or orgies connected with such worship as is implied.

Baal-peor: rather, 'Baal of Peor' = the Baal worshipped at Peor (Num. xxiii. 28), i. e. probably on mount Pisgah. This deity has by some been identified with the Moabite tutelar deity Chemosh; by others it has been supposed to have been a Moabite Priapus, having a worship with grossly immoral rites; see Driver on Deut. iv. 3.

dead: i. e. heathen gods, in contrast with the living God of Israel: see cxv. 5 ff., &c., and cf. xlii. 2.

By taking part in the sacrificial meals of the Moabites they were eating with their gods.

29. provoked him to anger: see Deut. iv. 25, &c.

plague: the Hebrew word generally means 'a pestilence' or 'disease inflicted by God.' The same word occurs in Num. xxv. 9.

30. See Num. xxv. 7 f.

Phinehas: son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron.

executed judgement: better, 'mediated' (Jero.).

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness,
Unto all generations for evermore.
32 They angered him also at the waters of Meribah,
So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:
33 Because they were rebellious against his spirit,
And he spake unadvisedly with his lips.
34 They did not destroy the peoples,
As the LORD commanded them;
35 But mingled themselves with the nations,
And learned their works:
36 And they served their idols;

---

31. counted unto him for righteousness: the phrase occurs in the Pentateuch of Abraham only: see Gen. xv. 6 (J).

As a reward for this act of faith Phinehas received for himself and his family the priestly office: see Num. xxv. 12 f.

32 f. *The seventh example of sin committed in the wilderness: the murmuring against Moses and Aaron at Meribah* (see Num. xx. 1-13). This incident occurred before that of verses 28-31, but it is placed last as involving the most serious of all the sins enumerated, Moses himself being concerned in it.

32. They angered him: a common expression in Deuteronomy. See Deut. viii. 22, ix. 7, &c.

Meribah: see on lxxviii. 15, lxxxi. 7, and xcv. 8.

it went ill with Moses, &c.: i. e. Moses was excluded from Canaan on account of this unbelief of the people. Two other reasons are given in the O. T. for the exclusion of Moses and Aaron from the promised land. See Num. xx. 1-13 (J, E) and Deut. i. 3, ii. 36, iv. 21.

33. they were rebellious: i.e. the Israelites: see 32^a and lxxviii. 40.

against his spirit: i.e. God's spirit, not Moses': see lxxviii. 40; Isa. lxiii. 10. The verb used (= defied) has God for object always.

spake unadvisedly: the same Hebrew verb in Lev. v. 4 (twice).

34-39. *Sins committed by Israel after reaching the Promised Land.* Two are spoken of: (1) they refused to exterminate the natives, though commanded to do so: 34 f. (see Exod. xxiii. 32 f., &c.); (2) they adopted some of the abominable rites of the Canaanites: 36-39.

Bickell and Duhm reject verse 34 as an interpolation.

36. See Exod. xxiii. 33; Judges ii. 3. 11-15; cf. Exod. xxxiv. 12; Deut. vii. 15.

Which became a snare unto them:
Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons, 37
And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, 38
Whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan;
And the land was polluted with blood.
Thus were they defiled with their works, 39
And went a whoring in their doings.

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37. demons: Heb. *Shedim*, a word which in the M.T. occurs only here and in Deut. xxxii. 17. It is probably derived from the Assyrian *shêdu*, the name of a storm-god represented by the bull Collossi often found in front of Assyrian temples. The Divine name *Shaddai* goes back apparently to the same Assyrian word. On these *shedim* see Driver on Deut. xxxii. 17, and cf. the new (third) edition (untranslated) of Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, pp. 360 f. These Israelites sacrificed their children to Babylonian deities. Neither **demons** (LXX, Vulg., Jero.) nor 'evil spirits' (Targ.) correctly represents the Hebrew. As to the practice of human sacrifice among the Assyrians see Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 78.

38. The Israelites learned from the Canaanites to offer human sacrifices; see Gen. xxii; Exod. xxii. 28, &c. Such sacrifices prevailed among the Moabites; 2 Kings iii. 27.

In some passages we have the phrase: 'They caused their sons to pass through the fire'; see Deut. xviii. 10, &c. In others the language is: 'They burned their sons in the fire'; see Jer. vii. 31, &c. But the former phrase (found in about seven places) should be altered: by transposing two of the letters of the word (*b* and *'ain*) we get 'They burnt' instead of 'They caused to pass.' This suits all the examples well. The old rendering gave rise to the notion, once generally held, that children were sacrificed to Moloch, the god of the Amorites, by being made to pass through a burning furnace.

the land was polluted: by the sins of the people: according to the ancient opinion as to the connexion between inhabitants and land, see Lev. xviii. 24 ff., &c.

39. (**Thus**) **were they defiled:** LXX 'was it (the land) defiled.'

went a whoring: Jehovah is Israel's husband (see Hos. ii. 2 f.), so that infidelity to Him is compared to a wife's infidelity to her husband. See Exod. xxxiv. 15 f. &c.

40 Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his
people,
And he abhorred his inheritance.
41 And he gave them into the hand of the nations;
And they that hated them ruled over them.
42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were brought into subjection under their hand.
43 Many times did he deliver them;
But they were rebellious in their counsel,
And were brought low in their iniquity.
44 Nevertheless he regarded their distress,
When he heard their cry:
45 And he remembered for them his covenant,
And repented according to the multitude of his mercies.
46 He made them also to be pitied

40-43. *Israel's sin punished.*

40. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people: these words recur in Judges frequently and in a similar connexion: see Judges ii. 14, 20, &c.

41. nations: i. e. 'the heathen.'

42. oppressed: see Judges iv. 3, x. 8; 1 Sam. ix. 16.

they were brought into subjection: for what this meant see Judges iv. 6-11; 1 Sam. xiii. 19 f.

43. Many times did he deliver them: by Othniel (Judges iii. 9), by Ehud (Judges iii. 15-29), by Shamgar (Judges iii. 31), by Deborah and Barak (Judges iv. 4-24), by Gideon (Judges vii. 19-25), by Jephthah (Judges xi. 12-33), by Samson (Judges xviii. 8-20), by David (2 Sam. v. 22-25), and by others.

were brought low: read (with a slight change), 'pined,' as in Lev. xxvi. 39, &c.

44-46. *Jehovah's remembrance of His covenant.*

44. their cry: 'their loud ringing cry': generally a cry of great joy; here of anguish.

45. he remembered . . . his covenant: see Lev. xxvi. 41 f.

repented: rather, 'and had compassion': see on xc. 13.

mercies: better, 'lovingkindnesses': better still the sing. with *keth.*, LXX, Jero. The Massorites (*qr.*) prefer the plural.

46. Render: 'He made them to be objects of pity,' &c.: see 1 Kings viii. 50.

Of all those that carried them captives.

Save us, O LORD our God, 47
And gather us from among the nations,
To give thanks unto thy holy name,
And to triumph in thy praise.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, 48
From everlasting even to everlasting.
And let all the people say, Amen.
Praise ye the LORD.

BOOK V.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: 107
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

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47 = 1 Chron. xvi. 35.

gather us: not from Babylon; cf. 'nations' (= 'the heathen'). It is the Diaspora of a later time that seems implied.

to triumph: rather = 'to make our boast.' The verb is Aramaic, and argues a late date.

48. An editorial appendix to close Book IV. Cf. the closing doxologies of Books I, II, and III.

Praise ye the LORD: i. e. Hallelujah: belongs to the next Psalm (*title*); so LXX. The word **Amen**, following a doxology, closes Books I, II, and III, and the same is doubtlessly true in the present case.

BOOK V.

This Book embraces Pss. cvii–cl. For introductory remarks see Introduction to Books IV and V, pp. 127 f.

PSALM CVII.

Theme. A call to praise Jehovah for His gracious acts.

I. *Title.* Hallelujah: see on cvi. 48.

II. *Contents.* Though Pss. cv f. belong to a different book they stand in close connexion with this Psalm, forming with it a series having a similar date and perhaps the same author: see Introd. to Ps. cv. These Psalms, though prompted, it may be, by some great act of deliverance, celebrate God's general goodness

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*,

---

to His people. Verses 23–32 show that the return from Exile is not the only blessing which this Psalm recalls.

The refrain, 'Let them give thanks to Jehovah,' &c., occurs in verses 8, 15, 21, 31, but it does not mark the logical divisions of the first part of the Psalm. Yet after it in each case one more verse completes the strophe, which seems to show that its present position was intended. This arrangement was probably due to liturgical requirements. There is no Psalm nor any portion of a Psalm more symmetrically arranged than verses 1–32.

(1) Introduction. General summons to praise Jehovah for His many deliverances (verses 1–3).

(2) Detailed enumeration of Jehovah's acts of deliverance (verses 4–32).

This enumeration is set forth in four strophes, each dealing with a different class of people helped in time of need. (1) The condition of those requiring aid is described; (2) these are represented as crying to God for help, and as receiving favourable answers; (3) they are then summoned to give thanks to their Divine Deliverer.

The four classes enumerated are as follows:

(1) Travellers who have lost their way in wilderness and desert (verses 4–9).

(2) Men imprisoned in dark dungeons because they defied Jehovah (verses 10–16).

(3) Men sorely afflicted by God on account of their sins (verses 17–22).

(4) Travellers on the sea in a furious and perilous storm (verses 23–32).

Verses 33–43 is an anthology made up of extracts taken from Job, Isa. xl ff., &c. Its rhythm or metre differs much from that of verses 1–32 as well as its subject-matter, though 36^b may have some affinity with the first part of the Psalm. Duhm and Cheyne(2) are probably right in seeing in these verses a late addition.

This part may be thus analysed:

(1) Jehovah punishes the wicked by making their land barren (verses 33 f.).

(2) Jehovah rewards the righteous by making their land fruitful and themselves more numerous (verses 35–38).

(3) He defends His people, but confounds His foes (verses 39–42).

(4) An exhortation to ponder upon these things (verse 43).

III. ***Authorship and Date.*** Most recent writers agree that the Psalm is post-exilic. Verses 1–3 speak of redeemed ones gathered from every quarter of the globe, showing that the writer has in

Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the adversary;
And gathered them out of the lands, 3
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

They wandered in the wilderness in a desert way; 4
They found no city of habitation.
Hungry and thirsty, 5
Their soul fainted in them.
Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, 6

---

mind many manifestations of the Divine power and love, though that from Babylon may have been the deliverance which prompted the Psalm, or at least verses 1-32; verses 33-43 seem to belong to a later date.

1-3. *Summons to give thanks to Jehovah.*

1. With this verse cf. cvi. 1, cxviii. 1, cxxxvi. 1.

2. redeemed: from the verb *ga'al*: see on lxxiv. 2.

redeemed of the LORD: from Isa. lxii. 12.

adversary: the Hebrew word can, and here does, mean 'distress': **hand** denotes here 'power.'

3. And gathered them: see cvi. 47; Jer. xxxii. 37, &c.

south: here again the E.VV. correct the M.T., reading *yamin* (south, *lit.* 'right hand') for *yam* ('west,' *lit.* sea, i. e. (usually) the Mediterranean). If, following the ancient versions, we retain *yam* (=sea), the reference must be to the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean, for it is the southern quarter that is meant; see ii. 8, lxxii. 8.

4-32. *Instances of Jehovah's acts of deliverance.*

4-9. *Travellers who have missed their way.*

4. wandered: Heb. 'lost their way.' The subject, not expressed, must be understood in an indefinite way according to a common Hebrew usage. **They wandered** = 'There were some who wandered.'

wilderness: the Hebrew word = 'wild pasture land on which cattle, &c. graze.'

desert way: render, 'in a desert of a way,' cf. Prov. xv. 19, 'fool of a man.' For the word **desert** see on cvi. 14. 'A desert of a way' = 'a way that is desert like,' i. e. rough, pathless, &c. LXX 'in a waterless desert.' For other interpretations see the Versions and the larger Commentaries.

5. Their soul = 'they themselves' according to Hebrew idiom.

fainted: Heb. 'continued in a faint condition.'

6. trouble: the radical idea in this word, and in that of verse 2

And he delivered them out of their distresses.
7 He led them also by a straight way,
That they might go to a city of habitation.
8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men !
9 For he satisfieth the longing soul,
And the hungry soul he filleth with good.

10 Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Being bound in affliction and iron ;
11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,
And contemned the counsel of the Most High :
12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour ;
They fell down, and there was none to help.
13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble,
And he saved them out of their distresses.
14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,

---

properly rendered above 'distress,' is 'straitness' : 'confinement in a narrow place.' The common greeting in Palestine is *Marhaba*, i. e. may you have enlargement. The principal Hebrew word for 'salvation' means 'enlargement,' and the name 'Jesus' means strictly 'the Enlarger,' or 'He who sets at large.' The same figures for distress and its opposite occur in most languages, including Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit.

he delivered : the same continuous or frequentative tense.

8. Render : 'Let them' (those guided, &c.) 'praise,' &c. The R. V. gives the word too general an application.

children of men : Semitic idiom for 'men' : see on lxxix. 11.

10–16. *Prisoners in dark regions.*

10. Such as sat in darkness : so in Isa. xlii. 7 of the exiles : cf. Isa. ix. 2; Mic. vii. 8 ; Jer. xvi. 16, xxxvi. 8.

shadow of death : see xxiii. 4 and on lxxxviii. 6.

Being bound in affliction and iron : render, 'being prisoners afflicted and in fetters' : see Job xxxvi. 8.

11. rebelled against : 'defied.' The Hebrew word is a great one in Deuteronomy : see Deut. i. 26, 43, ix. 23, &c.

12. he brought down : read, with LXX and Duhm, 'their heart was bowed down.' No change in the consonants is needed.

14. shadow of death : see on lxxxviii. 6.

And brake their bands in sunder.
Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, 15
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath broken the gates of brass, 16
And cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Fools because of their transgression, 17
And because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; 18
And they draw near unto the gates of death.
Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, 19
And he saveth them out of their distresses.
He sendeth his word, and healeth them, 20
And delivereth *them* from their destructions.
Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, 21

---

bands explains 'iron' in verse 10. The same noun and also the verb connected with it here occur in ii. 3. The verb is used in Judges xvi. 12 of Samson's snapping the cords.

15. See on verse **8.**

16. The words are from Isa. xlv. 2, and must therefore be of later date.

17-22. *Men sorely afflicted on account of their sins.*

17. Fools: i. e. wicked men.

their transgression: Heb. 'their rebellious conduct' (not as R.Vm.); see verse 11.

are afflicted: the Hebrew = 'afflict themselves': they bring suffering upon themselves by their disobedience. The tense denotes what is continuous.

18. Their soul: by a Hebrew idiom = 'they themselves'; see on lxxviii. 18; but 'soul' denotes also the organ of desire, appetite; so verse 9, xlii. 3, &c.

This verse rests on Job xxxiii. 20. What it says is that their sufferings take away their appetite and, at length, bring them to the verge of death.

20. word: i. e. command.

And delivereth . . . destructions: read, with Kahan, 'And delivers them' (*lit.* 'their life') 'from the pit' (=the grave). The change is obtained almost wholly by a rearrangement of the same Hebrew letters.

21. See on verse **8.**

And for his wonderful works to the children of men !
22 And let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare his works with singing.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters ;
24 These see the works of the LORD,
And his wonders in the deep.
25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths :
Their soul melteth away because of trouble.
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,

---

22. sacrifices of thanksgiving as in cxvi. 17 ; see Hos. xiv. 2 ('calves of our lips') and Heb. xiii. 15.

23–32. *Sea merchants—the fourth and last class.*

23. Render : 'They that descend into the sea in ships, That traffic over great waters' ; Hebrews spoke of going **down,** Greeks of going *up* into a ship.

do business : i. e. as merchants, not as fishermen.

great waters : see Isa. xxiii. 3 ; Ezek. xxvii. 25.

24. works . . . wonders : not the doings and outstanding acts of God in nature, storms and the like, but His deliverances during storms.

25. and raiseth : better construe the verb as intrans. (*Qal*) and not trans. (*Hiph*), though the Hebrew consonantal text can be either : render, 'And a stormy wind arose, which,' &c.

26 f. contain a description of sea sickness.

26. They : i. e. the sea merchants, not the waves.

Their soul : i. e. they themselves ; see on verse 18. Kirkpatrick quotes a similar passage from Vergil, *Aeneid*, iii. 564 :

> 'We are lifted heavenwards on the circling whirlpool, and so,
> When the wave is withdrawn we descend to the lowest shades.'

their soul melteth : i. e. they lose heart, courage.

27. Most commentators from Rosenmüller to Kirkpatrick quote a parallel description from Ovid, *Tristitia*, i. 2. 12 ff.

And are at their wits' end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, 28
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm, 29
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet; 30
So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.
Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, 31
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
Let them exalt him also in the assembly of the people, 32
And praise him in the seat of the elders.

And are at their wits' end: a charming setting of the Hebrew, 'and their skill is baffled' (*lit.* swallowed up).

28 = 6, 13, 19. The distress, the prayer, the deliverance follow just in that order in all the four pictures: cf. the Basque proverb quoted by Kay: 'Let him who knows not how to pray go to sea.'

29. He maketh, &c.: *lit.* 'He causes a storm to rise into silence,' a pregnant construction meaning, 'When He has raised a storm He causes it to die in silence.'

30. because they be quiet: i. e. the waves; see Jonah i. 11.

haven: render, 'city': the Hebrew word occurs only here: in Assyrian it means city.

33-43. This section of the Psalm differs from the rest in subject-natter, rhythm or metre, and in the fact that the refrain of verses 3, 15, 31 is lacking. Much of this part is borrowed, especially rom Isa. xl ff. and Job. Probably it is an addition made for iturgical purposes. The situation reflected in verses 1-32 is not uggested by verses 33 f.

33 f. Jehovah dries up streams and springs, and makes fruitful and barren on account of the people's sin.

Sudden changes of the kind described in these verses are ommon enough in the East. In verses 35 f. changes of a ontrary nature are pictured: promises involving these last are iven in Isa. xl ff. to the Babylonian exiles in order to encourage iem to return. Note how, as so often in Oriental literature, ie movements of nature are referred directly to spiritual agency, ere to Jehovah. Note also how sin is made the cause of isasters of a material sort

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness,
And watersprings into a thirsty ground;
34 A fruitful land into a salt desert,
For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
35 He turneth a wilderness into a pool of water,
And a dry land into watersprings.
36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
That they may prepare a city of habitation;
37 And sow fields, and plant vineyards,
And get them fruits of increase.
38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly;
And he suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

---

33. rivers and **watersprings** stand for the land watered by them.

wilderness: untilled and untillable pasture land; *lit.* 'a place where animals feed.'

33[a] was suggested by Isa. l. 2[b], and 33[b] by Isa. xxxvii. 7[a].

34. salt desert: Heb. a 'place that is salty': such a place is of necessity the opposite of a **fruitful land.** The same word occurs in Job xxxix. 6 (of the home of the wild ass), and in Jer. xvii. 6. Perhaps the writer has in mind the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrha; see Deut. xxix. 23.

35 f. The reverse picture to that of verses 33 f.

35 based on Isa. xli. 18: cf. Isa. xxxv. 7, xliii. 20. When the Algerian Arabs have sunk an artesian well they shout out 'Allah' (=God) 'is great, and He gives everything that is good.' So here the lake and the running streams are traced immediately to Divine agency.

37 f. continue the thought of 35 f., Jehovah rewards the righteous.

37. With 37[a] cf. Jer. xxix. 5.

And get them fruits of increase: Heb. idiom compels us to translate thus: 'which (the **fields** and **vineyards**) yield fruit' (of increase). The Hebrew for **of increase** is simply a marginal gloss explaining fruit: **fruit of increase** is an unknown phrase. The Hebrew for 'to yield fruit' is used invariably of fields, trees, and the like, but never of human agency.

38. He blesseth them: i. e. the fields and vineyards.

Again, they are minished and bowed down 39
Through oppression, trouble, and sorrow.
He poureth contempt upon princes, 40
And causeth them to wander in the waste, where there is no way.
Yet setteth he the needy on high from affliction, 41
And maketh *him* families like a flock.
The upright shall see it, and be glad; 42
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
Whoso is wise shall give heed to these things, 43
And they shall consider the mercies of the Lord.

A Song, a Psalm of David. **108**

My heart is fixed, O God; 1

39–42. *Jehovah protects His people, but confounds their foes.*

39. This verse forms the protasis to verse 41; verse 40 having been inserted from the margin, where a transcriber put it to show how Jehovah treats men of power who use their power to oppress His people. Translate verses 39 and 41 thus

(39) ‘And when they are made few and brought low,
Through oppression, adversity, and sorrow,
(41) He puts the needy on a height (safe) from affliction,
And makes (for him) families like a flock.’

39. Again: not in the Hebrew, nor required by the sense.

minished: an old English word now superseded by the compound ‘diminish.’

40. An interpolation taken *verbatim* from Job xii. 21^{a} and xxiv. 6 where the words are suitable, as they are not here.

41. like a flock: so numerous; see Job xxi. 11; Ezek. xxxvi. 37 f.; Zech. ix. 16.

42. 42^{a} from Job xxii. 19; 42^{b} from Job v. 16.

The verbs should be translated as presents, not futures.

43. Render:

‘Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things,
And let him (M. T. ‘them’) consider the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah.’

Cf. the end of Hos. xiv. 10, which is similar, and which closes he book as the words here close the Psalm; see Jer. ix. 11.

Psalm CVIII.

This Psalm is made up of two parts, each borrowed from older ’salms: verses 1–5 = lvii. 7–11; verses 6–13 = lx. 5–12.

I will sing, yea, I will sing praises, even with my glory.
2 Awake, psaltery and harp:
I myself will awake right early.
3 I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the peoples:

It is quite evident that the two parts are original in Pss. lvii and lx, as is shown by many considerations, such as that this Psalm is Elohistic, though the collection is Yahwistic; that the order of thought in this Psalm (thanksgiving, prayer) is the reverse of the usual one; and moreover this supposition best explains the deviations in the text.

Theme. Praise and thanksgiving followed by a prayer for help against enemies.

I. *Contents.* (1) Praise and thanksgiving (verses 1-5, taken from lvii. 7-11).

(2) Prayer for help against Israel's foes, based on God's promise to give the land of Canaan to His people, and to defend them from their enemies (verses 6-13, taken from lx. 5-12).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See vol. i, introductions to Pss. lvii and lx. The present composite Psalm is of course of later date than its component Psalms. All three Psalms are post-exilic.

1-5. *Praise and thanksgiving* = lvii. 7-11 (see notes on).

1. fixed: rather, 'prepared.' Different forms of the cognate verb occur in Gen. xliii. 16, 25; Exod. xxxiv. 2; 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, &c. 'My heart is in a prepared state: so I will sing.'

even with my glory: render, 'even I myself': a second subject to 'I will sing.' 'Glory' = 'soul' as in vii. 5, xvi. 9, xxx. 12, because the soul is the glory of the man: cf. xxx. 12, lvii. 8, and Gen. xlix. 6.

2. I myself will awake right early: render: 'I will awake at the dawn.' Delitzsch and others translate as in R.Vm. 'I will awake the dawn,' which the Hebrew equally allows; 'I will anticipate the dawn, rise before it to give thanks to Jehovah.'

For I **will awake** one is tempted to read 'I will sing,' changing one letter only for another resembling it closely; 'I will sing in the early morning.'

3. LORD: i.e. Jehovah: in the corresponding verse lvii. 9 *Adonai* (= Lord) is found, the word which the Jews read centuries before Christ and read still for *Yahweh*, and the vowels of which are attached to the consonants of *Yahweh* to make 'Jehovah' (Yehovah). This last is really no name at all, any more than 'Jahes' (consonants of 'John' and vowels of 'James'). The versions, ancient and modern, translate *Adonai* the substitute of *Yahweh* instead of transliterating the latter. When, however, 'Lord' represents *Yahweh* it has in the E.VV. large capitals, LORD. In

And I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.
For thy mercy is great above the heavens, 4
And thy truth *reacheth* unto the skies.
Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: 5
And thy glory above all the earth.
That thy beloved may be delivered, 6
Save with thy right hand, and answer us.
God hath spoken in his holiness; I will exult: 7

---

some French versions 'L'Éternel' is used, so that the distinction is kept up. If in Hebrew '*Yahweh* Lord' come together 'God' takes the place of Lord as a substitute for *Yahweh*, to prevent the repetition of the same word (Lord Lord): the Hebrew consonants of *Yahweh* are then supplied with the vowels of ***Elohim*** (God): see cix. 21 and on cxl. 7, and cf. vol. i. 358 f.

among the nations: therefore the writer is among foreigners in a foreign country. It is not, however, the Hebrew word, 'the heathen' (*goim*), that occurs here, though the two words used do naturally denote foreign nations.

4. mercy: rather, 'lovingkindness.'

great above: we must change the preposition, making it = (reaching) 'unto' as in the next clause, and as in the parallel part of lvii. 10. **Great above** followed by **unto** ('up to') would be an anticlimax.

heavens: 'great unto the heavens' = great as can be conceived.

truth: better, 'faithfulness.'

5. thy glory = 'thou thyself': see on verse 1. An interesting example of anthropomorphism. God's glory = God's soul (as if He had one) = God Himself. Here 'thy glory' is parallel to **thou.**

above all the earth: this introduces an anticlimax into the verse, and a very awkward one. We are evidently to translate 5^b thus: 'Let thy glory' (= thou thyself) 'be (more extended) than the earth.' The words in brackets are implied in the Hebrew: the verb 'to be' has often to be supplied. We thus avoid the anticlimax of the R. V.

6–13 = lx. 5–12 (see notes on).

Prayer for help against Israel's foes. The language of these verses suggests a situation of national danger, though no specific period can be inferred. The prayer is based on some promise or oracle given by Jehovah: see verses 6 f.

6. beloved: used like 'favoured ones' for the faithful in Israel.

(**answer**) **us:** read 'me' with the versions.

In verses 7–9 we have the contents of the oracle on which the prayer is based. We do not know when or under what circum-

I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.
8 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim also is the defence of mine head;
Judah is my sceptre.
9 Moab is my washpot;

---

stances this oracle was uttered. We seem to have here only a poetical rendering of 2 Sam. vii. 8 f. with an adaptation to suit the time. 2 Sam. vii is post-exilic (see Introd. to Ps. lxxxix), and so for certain is the oracle in verses 7–9 of the present Psalm, though it is doubtful whether John Hyrcanus (d. B. C. 105) is the only Jewish ruler to whose reign the words can apply (Duhm).

7. spoken: = 'sworn' as in lxxxix. 35.

in his holiness: better, 'by His holiness.' Jehovah's holiness is the pledge of His faithfulness.

I will exult: read, 'I will be strong,' i. e. victorious.

divide: i. e. portion out.

Shechem: west of the Jordan, representing the west Jordan district.

Succoth: the valley of Succoth lay at the mouth of the Jabboq, where the latter enters the Jordan. 'Succoth' stands here therefore for the territory east of the Jordan: see Gen. xxxiii. 17.

8. These words were written at a time when the districts named were in the hands of foes: this, however, would suit almost any period after the fall of the northern kingdom in B. C. 722.

Gilead and (north) **Manasseh** are intended to include the north-east Jordan country, as **Ephraim** and **Judah** stand for the country west of Jordan. But Shechem has been already mentioned: perhaps Ephraim occurs here for the sake of the parallelism. **Shechem** appears in verse 7 as = the west Jordanic territory, i. e. Ephraim and Judah.

the defence of mine head: i. e. my helmet: as Judah is to be the sceptre, Ephraim, as the most powerful tribe, will be the principal defence: this tribe would and did give the principal military leaders.

my sceptre: i. e. the royal power is to be exercised by the tribe of Judah. Gen. xlix. 10 (note the parallelism) shows that 'sceptre' or ruler's staff is what the word means, though the Hebrew word = 'a lawgiver,' 'one that enacts laws.' See Driver on Gen. xlix. 10.

9 f. Moab, Edom and Philistia, the long-time foes of Israel, will receive the punishment they deserve.

9. Moab will be used as a wash basin, in which the Jewish hero will wash away the dust of his feet.

Upon Edom will I cast my shoe:
Over Philistia will I shout.
Who will bring me into the fenced city? 10
Who hath led me unto Edom?
Hast not thou cast us off, O God? 11
And thou goest not forth, O God, with our hosts.
Give us help against the adversary: 12
For vain is the help of man.
Through God we shall do valiantly: 13
For he it is that shall tread down our adversaries.

Edom will be used as a rubbish heap, the ash-heap in front of the Oriental house. The Jewish hero will treat Moab as a wash basin, Edom as a heap of refuse. Driver thinks there is a reference to the not clearly established custom of throwing a shoe upon a piece of land in order to claim possession of it. Parallelism favours the interpretation given above.

shout: better, 'shout in triumph'; see xli. 12. The text here is correct: that in lx. 8 has been corrupted into 'shout thou.'

10 f. Prayer that God may give the promised victory.

10. The question implies a wish, in accordance with Hebrew idiom; though Heb. 'who will give' is most common in this sense.

'Would that some one would bring me,' &c. The indefinite form of the wish arises from the fact that the writer is full of the thing wished for: the *goal*—not the *means*. But the context shows that God was regarded as the only one who could grant the realization of the wish.

fenced city: some definite city seems intended, though it remains unnamed. It is better to restore 'city' before Edom; its omission being due to the double occurrence in the same verse of the same word. Then 'the defenced city' would be parallel to the 'city of Edom,' though we have no means of ascertaining what city the latter was. There could be no wish to be guided to Edom, for Judah joined on to Edom.

The Psalmist in this verse expresses the wish to be able to enter the Edomite city which the Jewish army was storming.

11. Render: 'Hast thou not, O God, cast us off, So that thou goest not forth with our hosts?'

12. against the adversary: better, 'in (*min*, see on cxviii. 5) distress.'

13. Through God = with His help; see lvi. 4.

do valiantly: see cxviii. 15 f.; Num. xxiv. 18.

109 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;
2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of deceit
have they opened against me:

Imprecatory or Vindictive Psalms.

Ps. cix is one of the fiercest of the above Psalms: others are lviii f., lxix, lxxxiii, and cxxxvii.

The maledictions in these Psalms represent the spirit of the age, and are very different from Christ's teaching in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' It should be borne in mind that they refer to this life only, and that the evil they pray for is never moral (lxix. 27 properly interpreted is no exception).

The word of blessing or curse was supposed by its being uttered to bring about its realization. See *Enc. Bibl.* art. 'Magic' (by the present writer), col. 2896; also art. 'Blessings and Cursings,' cols. 591 f. and on cxxxii. 15.

PSALM CIX.

Theme. Prayer for vengeance upon foes (or a foe).

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for protection against foes (or a foe) (verses 1–5).

(2) Prayer for vengeance upon one principal foe (verses 6–20).

(3) The author prays that Jehovah may pity and deliver him (verses 21–31).

II. *Authorship and Date.* There are in the Hebrew linguistic features which show that the Psalm is decidedly post-exilic. Moreover, the present Psalm is dependent on Pss. xxii, xxxv, xxxviii, lv, and lxix f., which confirm the evidence of late date supplied by the style. The extravagant character of the imprecations points to the same conclusion: see Psalms of Solomon iv (date about B. C. 180).

1–5. In these verses the Psalmist prays for help against deceitful and malicious foes. It is implied in verses 6–20, and perhaps in the M.T. of verse 2 (**the mouth of the wicked** [man]), that the Psalmist is thinking of but one foe. Duhm therefore alters the text in verses 1–5 wherever a plurality of enemies is involved, thus making the whole Psalm refer to one particular foe. The Psalm is then much more simple and consistent. The contrary view, that taken for granted in the English versions, requires a change in the text of verse 2, though that change should probably be made in any case.

1. God of my praise: i. e. God who is the object of my praise.

2. mouth of the wicked: Heb. 'the mouth of a wicked man':

They have spoken unto me with a lying tongue.
They compassed me about also with words of hatred, 3
And fought against me without a cause.
For my love they are my adversaries: 4
But I *give myself unto* prayer.
And they have rewarded me evil for good, 5
And hatred for my love.
Set thou a wicked man over him: 6
And let an adversary stand at his right hand.

---

so the versions. But parallelism favours 'the mouth of wickedness,' i. e. the wicked mouth.

have they opened: read with LXX, Pesh., Jero. 'is opened.' Perhaps the M. T. is due to the idea that foes are referred to, and not one foe.

3–5. In these verses the M. T. and the versions assume a plurality of foes.

3. Cf. Jer. xviii. 18.

4. Render: 'In return for my love (to them) they slander me: But I (take refuge) in prayer.'

are my adversaries: Heb. 'they slander me,' the verb being cognate to 'Satan.' The same verb occurs in verses 20, 29, and the noun in verse 6.

I ***give myself unto*** **prayer:** Heb. 'I (am) prayer.' By a common Hebrew idiom words in the predicative relation stand in the loose connexion called apposition: so cx. 3, cxx. 7. See on cxix. 75 for the employment of nouns as adjectives.

6–20. *Sundry curses uttered against some well-known enemy.* Who is the enemy that is meant? There can be no certainty on the matter: the answers have included Saul, Doeg, Ahithophel, Shimei, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Alqimus: they are dictated by he view taken of the date and occasion of the Psalm.

6. Render: 'Set thou over him as superior officer' (here 'judge,' ee verse 7) 'a wicked man: And let a lying accuser stand at his right hand.'

Set . . . over: the Hebrew verb is that translated in the XX by the verb which means 'make an overseer, make a bishop ver,' in the strict sense of bishop—an overlooker (not one that verlooks!). So in verse 8 'his office' is literally 'his overseerhip,' his 'bishopric.'

adversary: Heb. 'Satan': i. e. one that brings false charges gainst any person with malicious intent. LXX *diabolos*: the reek cognate verb (= Heb. *Satan*) occurs in Luke xvi. 1.

7 When he is judged, let him come forth guilty ;
And let his prayer be turned into sin.
8 Let his days be few ;
And let another take his office.
9 Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.
10 Let his children be vagabonds, and beg ;
And let them seek *their bread* out of their desolate places.

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7. When he is judged: Heb. 'When he goes to law': 'When he has a lawsuit on hand.'

guilty: the strict sense of the Hebrew word generally translated 'wicked,' though the usual sense is derived and secondary. The verb in the causative form (*Hiphil*) = to pronounce guilty.

let his prayer be turned into sin: let the prayer intended to obtain pardon be followed by greater guilt. The prayer of a wicked unrepenting man increases his wickedness.

8. This verse means : 'Let him die young : Yet even before his short life is closed let him lose the position of trust which he now has.'

8^{b} is quoted *verbatim* from the LXX in Peter's speech to the assembly of 120 brethren (Acts i. 20). In the same part of the speech lxix. 25 is also quoted (Acts i. 20), but the latter is altered so as to make the words refer to one enemy—Judas. To make Psalms lxix, cix wholly Messianic, the utterance of Christ concerning His enemies is so unreasonable and so blasphemous that one wonders that this has been done. See Introduction, 'The Messianic idea in the Psalms,' pp. 12 f.

In verses 9–15 the curse is made to embrace the man's relatives, wife, children, and even children's children (see Exod. xx. 5). This is in accordance with the provision of the ancient law contained in the Book of the Covenant : see Exod. xx. 5. It must be remembered that the feeling of solidarity (as before stated) was much stronger in the ancient than in the modern world : see on cvi. 6.

9. Some have inferred from this verse that Judas had a wife and children !

10. Render : 'Let them (children and wife : see verse 9) homelessly wander about, and beg hard (for bread) : And let them be driven from their ruined houses.'

his children: omit on metrical and other grounds.

let them seek: better read, 'let them be driven,' so LXX, and most moderns. The Hebrew in both cases is much alike.

desolate places: Heb. 'ruins': i. e. their ruined homesteads.

Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; 11
And let strangers make spoil of his labour.
Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; 12
Neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children.
Let his posterity be cut off; 13
In the generation following let their name be blotted out.
Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; 14
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
Let them be before the LORD continually, 15
That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

---

11. Render: 'Let the creditor seek whatever belongs to him: And let strangers take as booty what he has laboured for.'

catch: read (with LXX, Jero.), 'seek,' changing one letter.

his labour: here the produce of labour is meant.

12. This verse refers back to the situation implied in verse 11. When oppressed by creditors and robbed by strangers, let him, ind after his death his fatherless children, lack kind and gracious ielpers.'

extend mercy = 'continue to be kind.'

have pity on: Heb. 'be gracious to.'

13. posterity: this meaning of the Hebrew word is supported y parallelism. Duhm thinks the word stands here, as in xxxvii. 8, for the life beyond death, 'Let his future life be taken from im. See Introd. pp. 14 ff.

their name: read, '*his* name,' with LXX, Jero., Duhm.

14. his fathers: 'his *father*' is what we should have expected, orresponding to **his mother**: but the versions have all of them ie plural.

The curse in this verse is to be understood in the light of Exod. x. 5, and means, 'Let the iniquity of the parents be visited upon ieir children.' Note once more the solidarity of kith and kin: ee on verses 9-15.

be blotted out: from God's book of remembrance: see li. 1.

15. Let them: i. e. the iniquity of the fathers and the sin of ie mother (verse 14).

the memory of them: read, *his* **memory**, with LXX, Duhm: is is supported by the sense and by the use of the verb **remember** the singular in the next verse.

16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy,
But persecuted the poor and needy man,
And the broken in heart, to slay *them.*
17 Yea, he loved cursing, and it came unto him ;
And he delighted not in blessing, and it was far from him.
18 He clothed himself also with cursing as with his garment,
And it came into his inward parts like water,
And like oil into his bones.
19 Let it be unto him as the raiment wherewith he covereth
himself,
And for the girdle wherewith he is girded continually.
20 This is the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD,
And of them that speak evil against my soul.
21 But deal thou with me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake

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16. This verse contains the apodosis to verse 15, giving the reason why the sins of the parents should be perpetually before Jehovah : so most exegetes.

remembered not : 'took no thought of,' the strict sense of the Hebrew.

mercy : Heb. 'lovingkindness.'

to slay ***them*** **:** read, 'even to death.' So Pesh., Duhm. The M.T. is harsh if not incorrect.

17 f. describe the conduct of the enemy. It is better to construe the second clause in each line of these two verses as prophetic perfects or perfects of certainty. It will not then be necessary to alter the Hebrew verbs, making them imperfects as Duhm does. Translate these verses then as follows : 17. '(And) he loved cursing, and it will be sure to come to him : (And) he took no pleasure in blessing, and it will be sure to be far from him.' 18. '(And) he put on cursing as his garment, And it will be sure to come into his inward parts like water, And like oil in his bones' : so the LXX, Jero., Arabic.

18. oil among bones is very hard to be got rid of.

19. A wish—that the curser may be overwhelmed with curses as with a garment : that curses may cling to him as closely as the girdle fastened round his waist.

mine adversaries: Heb. 'my Satans' = my false and malicious accusers.

21–31. *Prayer for pity and deliverance.*

21. deal . . . with : the word 'kindness' is either to be under

Because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me,
For I am poor and needy, 22
And my heart is wounded within me.
I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: 23
am tossed up and down as the locust.
My knees are weak through fasting; 24
And my flesh faileth of fatness.
am become also a reproach unto them: 25
When they see me, they shake their head.
Help me, O Lord my God; 26
O save me according to thy mercy:

---

good or it must be supplied. We have in the latter case the regular formula for 'showing kindness.'

GOD: i. e. Jehovah: see on cviii. 3.

name's sake: for the sake of thy character; the prosperity f the Israelite carries with it the honour of the God he serves.

Because thy mercy, &c.: render, 'according to the goodess of thy lovingkindness, deliver thou me': so LXX, Jero., Targ.; f. xxv. 7, xxxi. 19, cxix. 124.

22. poor: i. e. afflicted, unhappy (subjective).

needy: i. e. poor, destitute (objective).

23. declineth: render, 'lengthens,' and see on cii. 11. The salmist compares himself to the lengthening shadows of evening: is day is nearing its close.

tossed up and down, &c.: i. e. I am shaken off from the nd of the living as the locust is tossed off from the garment to which it clings.

24. are weak: Heb. 'totter,' 'give way.'

faileth: 'becomes lean.'

of fatness: 'for lack of oil' (cf. **through fasting**): olive l still forms a very important element in Palestine food.

25. Besides his pining away in suffering and poverty his enemies ock him to scorn.

they shake their head: in contempt; see xxii. 7, &c.

26–31. There is no need with Delitzsch, &c., to separate these erses from verses 21–25. The same thought is preserved, and ere is nothing in the form of the poetry to suggest a separate rophe. Hebrew poets did not bind themselves to write in rophes.

26. See xxxi. 16.

27 That they may know that this is thy hand ;
That thou, LORD, hast done it.
28 Let them curse, but bless thou :
When they arise, they shall be ashamed, but thy servant
shall rejoice.
29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with dishonour,
And let them cover themselves with their own shame as
with a mantle.
30 I will give great thanks unto the LORD with my mouth ;
Yea, I will praise him among the multitude.
31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the needy,
To save him from them that judge his soul.

110 A Psalm of David.

1 The LORD saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand,

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27. this : i. e. the deliverance prayed for in verse 26.

thy hand = 'the work of thy hand,' as in lxxviii. 14 : cf 'the finger of God' in Exod. viii. 19, an expression still used in English.

28. When they arise, &c. : read (with LXX, &c.) : 'Those who rise against me shall be put to shame'(= 'be foiled').

thy servant : see on lxxxvi. 2.

29. Let them not only feel ashamed (foiled), but let their shame be manifest to others, as an outside garment.

mine adversaries : Heb. 'those who *Satan* me' = 'who falsely accuse me.'

mantle : the outer garment, the overall : so that which every one could see.

31. he shall stand at the right hand, &c. : the false accusers—the Satans—will be at the right hand to accuse (see on verse 6) : but Jehovah to bless.

PSALM CX.

Theme. Invitation to the priest-king to share Jehovah's throne

I. *Contents.* (1) Promise to the king of universal dominion (verses 1–3).

(2) The king is to be likewise priest (verse 4).

(3) Promise to this priest-king of victory over all his enemies (verses 5–7).

Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Pss. ii, xxi, xlv, and cx all refer to some reigning king, but there is no conclusive evidence for deciding which. David cannot be meant in the present Psalm, notwithstanding the title, for he is never called a priest, and the style and thought of the Psalm belong to a much later time than his. Most modern scholars agree that one of the Maccabean princes is intended. During the Persian and the Syrian suzerainty of Palestine the high priest was also the Governor. Perhaps one of these priest-rulers is the subject of the present Psalm. After the victory of the Maccabees over Syria, Judas and his successors became virtually civil rulers, kings. The first of these, however, to exercise royal and priestly functions was Jonathan (d. B.C. 143). Simon, his successor, was the first to be recognized by the Jews themselves as both civil and religious head, and most moderns see in him the person addressed in this Psalm. He alone received the high priesthood from the people, and the present Psalm is believed to have been put forth as the Divine sanction of the appointment.

Is the Psalm Messianic? Looking at it by itself, and without prepossession, one would not say that it is, for the writer has in mind some actual ruler of his own day, and his references are to events of his own time. But in the N. T. this Psalm is more than once quoted in reference to Christ, as by the Master Himself[1], by Peter[2], by Paul[3], and by the author of Hebrews[4].

An examination of the several O. T. passages quoted Messianically in the N. T. makes it clear that they are adduced, not because they had originally that application, but because they embody principles realized in the life and death of Jesus. Some texts from the O. T. are given a meaning in the N. T. which no modern exegete claims to be the sense of the original words. Many take refuge in the doctrine of the 'Kenosis,' that Christ in His humiliation subjected Himself to human limitations of knowledge, &c.[5] Others see in the use made of the O. T. by Christ, Peter, &c. examples of *ad hominem* arguments: the Jews are met on their own ground, their own Messianic interpretation of the O. T. being made the basis for argument. But he that has the Son has life, and this to its possessor is unanswerable proof of the Messiahship and Saviourhood of Him who was sent to seek and to save the lost.

1. Jehovah's oracle: the king is to share Jehovah's throne, and to have his dominion extended.

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[1] Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42 f.

[2] Acts ii. 34 f. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 25. [4] Heb. i. 13.

[5] See Phil. ii. 7: cf. Mark xiii. 32.

2 The LORD shall send forth the rod of thy strength out of
Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
3 Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy
power:
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,

Sit thou, &c. = 'Share thou my royal prerogative': the idea being that God is the true king of His people, earthly kings receiving their power from Him.

at my right hand: the place of highest honour; see 1 Kings ii. 19. Among the ancient Arabs the king's co-rider (his *ridf*) acted for him in his absence and, when necessary, otherwise.

Until I make, &c.: this rendering, supported by the ancient versions, and implied in 1 Cor. xv. 24 f., means that the priest-king will cease to share Jehovah's throne when his foes have been subdued. But the sense of the Hebrew is, 'So that I may make,' &c.: so Baethgen, Wellhausen, &c.

footstool: it was a custom in ancient times for conquerors to place their feet on the necks or prostrate bodies of the conquered; see Joshua x. 24: the language here is derived from that practice, though the thing itself is hardly meant.

2. Verse 1 contains the oracle proper: in the following verses its content is developed.

send forth: i. e. extend.

the rod of thy strength: Heb. 'thy rod of strength,' i. e. thy powerful sceptre; see Jer. xlviii. 17; Ezek. xix. 11-14. The rod or sceptre here is the sign of authority, and has nothing to do with punishing as such; cf. 'rule thou' in the next clause.

Before **rule thou** 'saying' is understood: the words are Jehovah's.

3. offer themselves willingly: Heb. 'are willingnesses,' a Hebrew way of saying 'they are very willing' (plural of intensity); cf. the English 'He is all generosity,' and see on cix. 4.

in the day of thy power: render: 'in the day of thy host' or 'army': i. e. in the day when thy army marches forth against the foe. So Targ. and most moderns.

The people ought to be ready to fight, not when the king has reached power, but before that, so that he may attain to power.

In the beauties of holiness: read, 'on the holy mountains': i. e. the mountains round about Jerusalem; see lxxxvii. 1. So Sym., Jero., and several MSS. and editions. Two very similar Hebrew letters (*d* and *r*) have been here, as often, confounded.

from the womb of the morning: these words are closely

Thou hast the dew of thy youth.
The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, 4
Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.
The Lord at thy right hand 5

---

connected with the following as well as with the words immediately preceding, which have just been noticed. The dew with which he young men are compared is morning dew, such as issued rom the womb of the morning, i. e. it is fresh, pure. **Youth** neans here as elsewhere 'young men' (see Eccles. xi. 9 f.). We nust understand the 'dew of thy young men' as meaning (the resh morning) dew which is (symbolizes) thy young men: cf. Garden of Eden' = 'the Garden which is Eden.' The young heroes vho will so readily take up arms on behalf of the new ruler are escribed as marching on the holy mountains around Jerusalem, vith energy as fresh and pure as the morning dew.

The LXX renders 'From the womb, before the day star I egat thee.' Many of the early fathers quoted this rendering in roof of the eternal generation of the Son. Their knowledge of ie O. T. was obtained from the Greek versions only—with few xceptions.

4. The king is to be also priest: render: 'Thou art a priest for ver because of Jehovah, O righteous king.'

(a priest) for ever: to be taken in the sense required by the ontext, here for the whole extent of the king's life. In 1 Macc. xiv. the corresponding Greek expression is used of Simon's reign.

After the order of: this is a translation of the LXX and Jero.; nilarly the Pesh. ('like Melchizedek'). The Hebrew can only ean 'on account of,' 'because of,' i. e. because appointed by. ie expression is late Hebrew, and occurs in Eccles. iii. 18, vii. 14, i. 2, and with a trivial change in Pss. xlv. 5, lxxix. 9, &c. it a 'priest . . . because of Melchizedek' has no meaning. The un in this phrase has an appended letter (*yod*), which in late ebrew is a common abbreviation of *Yahweh* (Jehovah). Or we iy render, 'Thou art a priest through me,' i. e. because I have pointed thee. The LXX version is followed in Heb. vii. 11, verse 13. The proper name Melchizedek, notwithstanding its ociations, has to be surrendered. The king addressed was, rhaps, Simon Maccabee.

5–7. *Promise to the priest-king of victory over his enemies.*

5. at thy right hand: see on verse 1. Here, however, the ne is transferred to the battlefield: see xvi. 8, cix. 31, cxxi. 5.

Shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
6 He shall judge among the nations,
He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies;
He shall strike through the head in many countries.
7 He shall drink of the brook in the way:
Therefore shall he lift up the head.

111 Praise ye the LORD.

Shall strike through: better, 'shall shatter.' The future is certainly right: cf. **He shall judge,** in verse 6. The Hebrew tense is a case of the 'perfect of certainty'; see below.

in the day of his wrath: the day on which He will vent His wrath by punishing the rebellious nations.

6. Render: 'He shall exercise rule over the heathen nations: He will fill with corpses (the countries where He will wage battle): He will smite rulers (collective) over much land.'

The two latter verbs are examples of the 'perfect of certainty': 'He will certainly fill' . . . 'smite.'

7. The subject of this verse is suddenly changed. In verse 6 Jehovah is almost certainly the subject: here it is the king, though we can gather that from the sense only.

The king in his career of conquest will stop and refresh himself by the brook's edge: then he will on with uplifted head—confident and joyous.

PSALMS CXI ff.

Hallelujah Psalms.

The following are strictly 'Hallelujah Psalms,' i. e. they have *Hallelujah* at the beginning (where alone it originally stood: see Introduction to Ps. cv), or at the end, or both: civ–cvi, cxi–cxiii, cxv–cxvii, cxxxv, cxlvi–cl. In Ps. cxxxv we have the word in the body of the same (verse 3) as well as in the beginning of it—there is no other example of this. We never meet with the formula in the O. T. outside the above Psalms, nor is it a part of the original Psalm except in Ps. cxxxv. 3: the Alphabetic Psalms (cxi f.) put this beyond question: see on cxi. 1.

In the Hebrew this formula is made up of two words meaning *lit.* 'Praise ye Yah': in the E.VV. it occurs as 'Praise ye the LORD.' The ancient scribes disputed much and warmly as to whether the formula should be written as two words or as a compound. In the Greek and Latin versions, and in the texts of Baer and Delitzsch and Ginsburg, it is treated as one word.

The Hallel. That some collection of Psalms called the 'Great Hallel or the 'Egyptian Hallel' was sung during the celebration of the

I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart,
In the council of the upright, and in the congregation.
The works of the Lord are great, 2
Sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

Passover is supported by all Jewish authorities, but opinions differ much as to what Psalms the collection embraced. This much, however, seems certain, that in our Lord's day no such 'Hallel' collection of Psalms had been made, so that it is an evident mistake to say, as is constantly done, that the Master and His disciples sang the Hallel on the evening of the first Lord's Supper. It may be added that 'Hallel' is simply a contraction of 'Hallelujah.' Ps. cxiv has, probably, no right to be considered one of the 'Hallel' or 'Hallelujah' Psalms, for the word 'Hallelujah' is not found in t, nor is the note of praise so manifest as in the rest of the group—Pss. cxi–cxviii.

Psalm CXI.

Theme. The praiseworthiness of Jehovah.

I. *Contents.* Alike in form and in substance Ps. cxi f. are nearly llied, and there is good reason for supposing that they sprang out f the same circumstances and had the same author. In Ps. cxi he praises of Jehovah are sung, in Ps. cxii the prosperity and irtues of His people. Both are alphabetic acrostics, and in both : is the acrostic arrangement that dominates the order of thought, nd not the thought itself, so that an analysis of either Psalm cannot be attempted. Both Psalms depend much on earlier ones and lso on Proverbs, as to matter and language.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The dependence of Ps. cxi f. on other 'salms and on other parts of the O.T., the language of the Psalm, nd their acrostic form—these show that the two Psalms are very te productions; but nothing more definite can be safely said.

1. *ālĕph, bēth.*

Praise ye the LORD: (*Hallelujah*) this belongs to the title nd not to the Psalm itself; otherwise the Psalm does not begin ith *ālĕph.*

council: a company of men bound together by common and eculiar interests: almost like our 'club.'

congregation: the festive gatherings seem intended. It is ot likely that the synagogue is meant, as it is fairly certain that orship formed no part of the proceedings in that institution until ter the final destruction of the Jerusalem temple in A. D. 71; see lxxiv. 8.

2. *gīmĕl, dālĕth.*

Sought out: rather (as Jero.), 'to be sought out': see on xcvi. 4.

3 His work is honour and majesty:
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered:
The LORD is gracious and full of compassion.
5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him:
He will ever be mindful of his covenant.
6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works,
In giving them the heritage of the nations.
7 The works of his hands are truth and judgement;
All his precepts are sure.

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3. *hē, wāw.*

His work: rather, 'His doing.'

honour and majesty: we should say 'honourable' (or rather 'glorious') 'and majestic.' In Hebrew nouns are used very commonly for adjectives: see on cix. 4.

4. *zain, khēth.*

He hath made . . . to be remembered: Heb. 'He has made a memorial for His marvellous deeds.' The Hebrew word for 'memorial' may be used of a commemorative deed or of a festival, see xxx. 4. A variant of the same word occurs in Exod. xii. 14 for Passover, and Luther, Hupfeld, &c., think that the Passover is here referred to. It is probably in reference to this word that Luther calls the present Psalm a Paschal or Easter Psalm.

5. *ṭēth, yōdh.*

meat: better, 'nourishment,' as in Prov. xxxi. 5. The Hebrew word is rare, and is selected because it begins with *ṭēth*, the appropriate letter in the acrostic.

covenant: to be understood in the general sense which the word bears in Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, &c.

6. *kaph, lāmēdh.*

the power, &c.: i. e. the power displayed in what He did for His people: this power appeared on a large scale when He enabled them to possess the lands of the heathen.

nations: the Hebrew word means in the plural almost invariably 'the heathen.'

7. *mēm, nūn.*

God's acts display both faithfulness and righteousness.

truth: better, 'faithfulness.'

judgement: justice.

precepts: what He has enjoined: see xix. 8. Here, however, His principles of world-government are meant: these will never fail.

They are established for ever and ever, 8
They are done in truth and uprightness.
He hath sent redemption unto his people; 9
He hath commanded his covenant for ever:
Holy and reverend is his name.
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; 10
A good understanding have all they that do thereafter:
His praise endureth for ever.

Praise ye the LORD. 112
Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD,

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9. *pē*, *tsādhe*.

redemption (Heb. *peduth*, see on lxxiv. 2): the primary eference is to the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. vii. 8 and often); ut some recent act of deliverance is in the writer's mind.

commanded: i.e. ordained, as such. 'To command a covenant' = to set up, make a covenant, as in cv. 8.

reverend: to be feared.

his name = 'Jehovah Himself as revealed.'

9^b refers to the legislation on Sinai as 9^a does to the preceding eliverance from Egypt.

10. *rēsh*, *shīn*, *tāw*.

The fear of the LORD, &c.: taken from Prov. i. 7, ix. 10; cf. b xxviii. 28; Eccles. i. 20. This is the fundamental principle of e Wisdom School of Philosophy. Wisdom consists in the fear God: in proper reverence for Him. 'The fear of Jehovah' is ggested by the last part of verse 9, 'to be feared is His name.'

that do thereafter: Heb. 'that do them,' i. e. the precepts: t this word is too far back: read (with LXX, Pesh., Jero.), 'that (or practise) it' (i. e. the fear of Jehovah); see Prov. i. 7.

His praise: His praiseworthiness: what in Him is praise-rthy.

PSALM CXII.

Theme. The good fortune of those who fear Jehovah.

For introductory remarks see Introduction to Ps. cxi.

1. *ālĕph*, *bēth*.

Praise ye the LORD: see on cxi. 1.

Blessed: see on lxxxiv. 4.

that feareth the LORD: taking up 'the fear of the LORD' in c. 10, and pointing to the intimate relation between the two lms.

That delighteth greatly in his commandments.
2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth:
The generation of the upright shall be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches are in his house:
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness:
He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5 Well is it with the man that dealeth graciously and lendeth;
He shall maintain his cause in judgement.
6 For he shall never be moved;

That delighteth greatly: see cxi. 2; cf. xl. 8, cxix. 35, 97.

2. *gīmĕl, dālĕth.*

mighty: here the word has the general meaning of powerful, and not the sense 'mighty in war' which it generally has. This Hebrew word is selected because it begins with the proper acrostic letter (*g*).

3. *hē, wāw.*

Wealth: in the Old English sense of well-being.

righteousness: in cxi. 3 the word stands for God's righteousness as a moral quality: here it denotes man's, but in the sense common in Isa. xl ff.; cf. Ps. xxiv. 5, i. e. man's happiness and safety as secured by the Divine righteousness.

4. *zain, khēth.*

Render: 'Light arises in the darkness to the upright—The gracious, the compassionate, and the righteous.'

Throughout this Psalm the faithful man is described in terms applied in Ps. cxi to God; hence Hengstenberg calls Ps. cxii a 'holy parody' of Ps. cxi. The three adjectives in 4^b refer to the **upright** man and not to God.

light and **darkness** stand here for joy and sorrow, as in Isa. lviii. 10.

5. *tēth, yōdh.*

He shall maintain, &c.: render, 'who supports his cause justly': when he makes a loan he takes no undue advantage of the borrower, as was then and is now often done.

in judgement does not mean here 'when he goes to law,' but 'with justice,' i. e. justly. The Hebrew can mean either.

6. *kaph, lāmēdh.*

For: better, 'surely,' though the Hebrew word (translated in Exod. iii. 12 'certainly') means either. This verse contains two independent statements concerning the good man.

The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.
He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: 7
His heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.
His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, 8
Until he see *his desire* upon his adversaries.
He hath dispersed, he hath given to the needy; 9
His righteousness endureth for ever:
His horn shall be exalted with honour.
The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; 10

The righteous: the rhythm of the verse gains by omitting hese words as Baethgen does. The subject of 6^a is also that of 6^b, he,' &c. (see verse 5).

The righteous . . . remembrance: see xxxvii. 36 f.; Prov. x. 7; Sir. xliv. 1-15. This is the immortality hoped for by the Psalmists—to be remembered for what they shall have done; they show no inkling of any other: see Introduction, pp. 14 ff.

7. *mēm, nūn.*

trusting: the word upsets the rhythm of the Hebrew, and is no doubt a gloss originally inserted in the margin to explain **fixed** (= steadfast).

8. *sāmēkh, ʿain.*

established: the word is used in Ps. cxi. 8 of God's injunctions (precepts): it means literally 'supported,' 'held up,' and has here he same sense as the word rendered 'fixed' in verse 7. The present word is selected in both Psalms owing to the exigency of he acrostic form of the two Psalms.

see *his desire* upon: the Hebrew expression, *lit.* 'to look upon' = 'to gaze on with glee,' 'to feast one's eyes on': see note on xcii. 11 and cf. cxviii. 7. It is not the highest point in ethics or religion to rejoice in the downfall of one's enemies: but God rained His people gradually; the highest lessons were not taught until the lower ones had been mastered—the method adopted by wise teachers now.

9. *pē, tsādhe, qōph.*

His righteousness, &c.: same sense as in verse 3: this is upported by the next clause.

His horn, &c.: in lxxv. 4 f. the arrogant are pictured as ossing up their horn. Here the horn of the righteous (= prosperous) ones goes up of its own accord. Those who abase themelves shall be exalted: see lxxxix. 24. For the expression exalting the horn' see on lxxv. 4.

10. *rēsh, shīn, tāw.*

shall see it, and be grieved: contrast with this what is said

He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away:
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

113 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise, O ye servants of the LORD,
Praise the name of the LORD.
2 Blessed be the name of the LORD
From this time forth and for evermore.

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of the righteous one in verse 8b, he shall feast his eyes on the ruin of the wicked; here too the wicked open their eyes, but only to see what grieves them.

The desire, &c.: i. e. the thing desired, as in lxxviii. 29, &c. We must, however, read 'hope' here as most moderns do. The Hebrew words are much alike.

PSALMS CXIII—CXVIII.

The name the 'Egyptian Hallel' has been given to Pss. cxiii–cxviii: see *Hallelujah Psalms*, pp. 226 f.

Ps. cxiv lacks the title 'Hallelujah,' though it has it in the LXX, and it is probably to be restored to the Hebrew; yet this Psalm is not so manifestly a 'hallel' or 'praise' Psalm as the other 'Hallelujah' Psalms.

PSALM CXIII.

Theme. A summons to praise Jehovah because of His greatness and goodness.

I. *Contents.* (1) The summons to praise Jehovah (verses 1–3).
(2) The grounds on which the summons rests.
(*a*) Jehovah is lofty and glorious (verses 4 f.).
(*b*) He has condescended to help His creatures (verses 6–9).

II. *Authorship and Date.* Pss. cxiii and cxiv have much in common; both are generally traced to the feeling of joy and gratitude which prevailed among the Jews soon after the return from Babylon, and may be the work of the same author.

1–3. *A summons to praise Jehovah.*

1. Praise ye the LORD: see on cxi. 1. By making this a part of the Psalm we destroy the symmetry of the Psalm, which without it is made up of a number of distichs.

servants of the LORD: verse 3 shows that Delitzsch, &c., are wrong in restricting the words to the true Israel.

name: 'to praise Jehovah's name' = 'to praise Him as He is revealed.'

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same 3
The LORD'S name is to be praised.
The LORD is high above all nations, 4
And his glory above the heavens.
Who is like unto the LORD our God, 5
That hath his seat on high,
That humbleth himself to behold 6
The things that are in heaven and in the earth?
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, 7
And lifteth up the needy from the dunghill;

---

3. See l. 1: cf. Isa. lix. 19; Zeph. iii. 9; Mal. i. 11.

4–9. *Why Jehovah should be praised.*

4 f. Jehovah is great.

4. all nations: here the word which in the plural means early always 'the heathen' means 'all nations—including Israel': xcix. 2.

high above = 'higher than': a rare form of the comparative: ound also in Hellenistic Greek (*hyper*).

his glory (is) **above the heavens** = '(is) more glorious than ie heavens.' See xix. 1: the heavens, being His handiwork, eclare His glory; but His personal glory far transcends that of ın, moon, and stars.

6–9. *Jehovah's condescension to help His people.*

6. Render: 'who stoops to look from the heaven upon the ırth?'

The things that are: not in the Hebrew, and not required r the sense.

in heaven: we must certainly read 'from the heavens.' All e following clauses refer to God's doings on the earth.

and in the earth: render, 'upon the earth.' The 'and' was serted to make sense after a copyist had accidentally written n' instead of '*from* the heavens.'

7. poor: the Hebrew word means primarily those reduced in sition: the idea of poverty is a derived one. Jehovah lifts up en who have sunk as low down in the social scale as possible f. **the dust**).

dunghill: the Heb. = 'dung itself': then it came to stand those heaps of dung and other débris which used to be in front Oriental houses. Beggars and lepers were wont to sit on these tificial hills, soliciting by looks and gestures, if not by words, the

8 That he may set him with princes,
Even with the princes of his people.
9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house,
And to be a joyful mother of children.
Praise ye the LORD.

114 When Israel went forth out of Egypt,

---

gifts of the inmates of the houses. Jehovah causes the unfortunate denizens of these dunghills to rise to high stations.

8. See Job xxxvi. 7, and cf. 2 Sam. ix. 7.

9. The language of this verse was suggested to a large extent by that of 1 Sam. ii. 5; see Isa. liv. 1, lxvi. 8.

9. Praise ye the LORD (= Hallelujah). In the LXX this formula is rightly transferred to the beginning of Ps. cxiv.

PSALM CXIV.

Theme. The consternation of nature at Jehovah's marvellous deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

This is one of the most charming lyrics in the Psalter, alike in structure, language, and thought. Its parallelism is as near perfection as that of any part of the O. T.

Dante makes spirits redeemed from the bondage of the flesh sing this Psalm as they are about entering Purgatory:

> '*In exitu Israel de Egypto.*
> Sang all together in one voice,
> With what of that Psalm is thereafter written[1].'

I. *Title:* **Praise ye the LORD** (= Hallelujah), wrongly put at the end of Ps. cxiii in the M.T.

II. *Contents.* (1) The consternation of nature at the marvel of the Exodus (verses 1–4).

(2) That Exodus was a sign of the Divine presence: well might therefore nature be affrighted (verses 5–8).

This Psalm is combined with the following Psalm in the LXX, Theod., Pesh., Arab., Eth., and in many MSS. of the Hebrew: but these make two psalms out of Psalm cxvi, thus leaving the number of psalms in the group cxiii–cxviii the same, viz. six.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cxiii.

1–4. *Nature amazed.* The deliverance from Egypt is naturally recalled by other deliverances (Babylon, &c.).

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[1] *Purgatory*, ii. 46 ff.

The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
Judah became his sanctuary, 2
srael his dominion.
The sea saw it, and fled; 3
ordan was driven back.
The mountains skipped like rams, 4
The little hills like young sheep.
What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest? 5
Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams; 6
Ye little hills, like young sheep?
Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, 7

---

1. a people of strange language: in post-Biblical Hebrew substantive cognate to the word translated 'strange language' = a foreign tongue.' No form of the root occurs in the O.T. except ere (where it is a participle). The Egyptian language was trange to the Israelites when they entered the land of the haraohs: see Gen. xlii. 23.

2. Judah and **Israel** are only poetically distinct: there was ow no Israel except Judah, and there is an implication that the orthern kingdom never had the Divine sanction, since the only ecognized sanctuary is in Judah.

3. See Exod. xiv. 19–24.

The Red Sea and the Jordan are personified. As soon as they w their Maker drawing near at the head of His people they tired, leaving an open way for the people to cross. 'Awe-ruck nature recognized and obeyed its Master's will' (Kirk-trick).

saw—what? Jehovah leading His people: this is shown by rse 7 and by the similar passages lxxvii. 16; Hab. iii. 10; cf. xcvii. 4.

was driven back: Heb. 'turned back.'

4. mountains and hills (not **little hills**) skipped (= danced) fear: the figure is borrowed from xxix. 6, the imagery here ferring to the trembling of Mount Sinai when Jehovah manisted Himself, Exod. xix. 18; see lxviii. 9; Judges v. 5.

5–8. *Explanation of the consternation of nature.*

5 f. Note the striking apostrophe to the sea, the Jordan, and mountains, for the sake of explaining more graphically the traordinary effect of the Divine appearance.

7 f. Instead of giving a direct answer to the question, the poet

At the presence of the God of Jacob;
8 Which turned the rock into a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

115 Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,

---

says that all the earth (mountains, &c.) might well writhe in agony at the approach of its Maker.

7. Tremble: render, 'Be in pangs': the verb is used of the pains of childbirth.

8. For the two wilderness incidents here spoken of see on lxxviii. 15.

pool of water, fountain of waters: both from Isa. xli. 18.

flint: see Deut. viii. 15, 'rock of flint.'

PSALM CXV.

Theme. Jehovah's help is sought in some unknown emergency. He alone is the true God, and He is alone therefore to be trusted in and worshipped.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer to Jehovah for help since the humiliation of His people is His own humiliation (verses 1–3).

(2) The gods of the heathen are helpless, and therefore cannot help (verses 4–8).

(3) Israel is urged to seek refuge in Jehovah who can and does help (verses 9–11).

(4) Jehovah has blessed and will continue to bless Israel (verses 12–18).

This Psalm was composed for temple use, and was probably intended, as Ps. cxxxvi, &c., to be sung antiphonally, though the rapid changes of person, tense, and number are no proof of this last, since in Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew poetry such sudden transitions are frequent.

Assuming that the Psalm is antiphonal (so Ewald, Köster, &c.) the following arrangement of parts is suggested:

1–8 the whole temple choir.
9ᵃ first batch of singers.
9ᵇ second batch of singers.
10ᵃ first batch of singers.
10ᵇ second batch of singers.
11ᵃ first batch of singers.
11ᵇ second batch of singers.
12 the whole temple choir.
13 first batch of singers.
14 f. second batch of singers.
16–18 the whole temple choir.

Though LXX, Theod., Pesh., Jero., and many MSS. join this

But unto thy name give glory,
For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.
Wherefore should the nations say, 2
Where is now their God?
But our God is in the heavens: 3
He hath done whatsoever he pleased.
Their idols are silver and gold, 4

Psalm to that which precedes, the style and contents differ so much that these Psalms must originally have been quite distinct.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The appeal in verses 1-3 seems to mply that the nation is passing through a period of suffering, hough whether that suffering is due to the persecution of the Samaritan party in the fifth century B.C., or to the action of the Syrians and the Syrian party over two centuries later, or to some other cause, there is no data for determining. The prominence given n the Psalm to priests, and its silence regarding king and prophets, prove that the Psalm is, at least, post-exilic.

Hitzig sees in Pss. cxv-cxviii a kind of poetical drama in which he incidents of Jonathan's life are portrayed, from his military expedition into Galilee (cxv) to his triumphant return to the Jerusalem temple (cxviii): see 1 Macc. xi.

1-3. *Jehovah is entreated to help for His own honour's sake* (cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 23ᵇ).

1. We seek thy aid not that glory may come to us by the resulting victory, but that thy lovingkindness (not **mercy**) and aithfulness (not **truth**) to thy own may be displayed. See a similar prayer in Dan. ix. 18 f. Thus will God's name, i.e. His character, be revealed.

2 = lxxix. 10, cf. xlii. 3, 10; Exod. xxxii. 12; Num. xiv. 13 ff.; Joel ii. 17; Mic. vii. 10.

nations: better, 'heathen.'

now: a different Hebrew word from the adverb of time = now.' It is the rhetorical 'now': 'Where, prithee, is that God of theirs?' This particle is absent from lxxix. 10, which otherwise agrees exactly with the present verse.

3. in the heavens: i.e. He is not material, visible, tangible. The words assert the spirituality of Jehovah. If they meant only He lives in heaven,' 'is confined to heaven,' that would have been also a low view of deity.

4-8. *Helplessness of the gods of the heathen.* In this section it seems taken for granted that the god of the heathen is the material object, that alone: no note at all is taken of any *numen* or spiritual

The work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they speak not;
Eyes have they, but they see not;
6 They have ears, but they hear not;
Noses have they, but they smell not;
7 They have hands, but they handle not;
Feet have they, but they walk not;
Neither speak they through their throat.

being residing within the object. There is the same underlying assumption in cxxxv. 6, 15-21 (practically = our verses 4-10), in Deut. iv. 28, and in the brilliant irony of Isa. xliv. 9-20. Is this a fair view to take of heathenism? In itself no. It is impossible to think of any rational being sinking so low as this. Carlyle writes: 'Idol . . . is not God, but a symbol of God: and perhaps one may question whether any, the most benighted, mortal ever took it for more than a symbol[1].' One may surely more than question anything so unlikely. But the heathen claimed for his religion the supposed advantage that his god had an outward embodiment: something to see, as in the case of man. It was a proper retort to make that the heathen god judged by his external form could do nothing.

4. Their idols: i. e. the idols of the heathen (verse 4). The LXX, Jero., Pesh. read 'the idols of the heathen'; so cxxxv. 15. The Hebrew word rendered **idol** means 'something formed,' 'fashioned.' **Idol** is the English form of the Greek word used in the LXX which = 'something seen.'

silver and gold: i. e. the idols were covered with those metals: not made of solid silver and gold.

5-7. Though these idols have apparently every bodily organ, they cannot perform any of the corresponding functions. In these verses we must render the imperfect tenses by 'cannot': 'they cannot speak, see, hear, smell,' &c.—a sense often conveyed by the Hebrew imperfect (not properly a tense).

7. Render: 'As regards their hands, they' (the idols) 'cannot handle' (= touch). 'As regards their feet, they' (the idols) 'cannot walk: Nor can they give forth any (inarticulate) sound with their throat.'

handle: the Hebrew means 'to touch,' 'to feel one's way' (in the dark).

Neither speak they: speaking is, however, referred to in

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[1] *Heroes and Hero Worship,* Lecture iv.

They that make them shall be like unto them ; 8
Yea, every one that trusteth in them.
O Israel, trust thou in the LORD : 9
He is their help and their shield.
O house of Aaron, trust ye in the LORD : 10
He is their help and their shield.
Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD : 11
He is their help and their shield.
The LORD hath been mindful of us ; he will bless *us* : 12
He will bless the house of Israel ;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
He will bless them that fear the LORD, 13
Both small and great.
The LORD increase you more and more, 14
You and your children.

---

verse 5 in connexion with the mouth. Here we must understand narticulate sounds in the throat, which have not reached the stage of speech : even this much these idols are incapable of. The noun in xc. 9 is cognate with the verb here : see on this passage.

8. shall be : better, 'shall become.' Those who worship such helpless idols shall become themselves helpless : see 2 Kings xvii. 15 ; Isa. xliv. 9 f. ; Jer. ii. 5 ; Rom. i. 21–23.

9–11. *Israel urged to seek refuge in the all-helping Jehovah.*

In these verses three classes are addressed : **Israel** (verse 9), **house of Aaron**, and **ye that fear the LORD** ; we have the same hreefold division in cxviii. 2–4 and in cxxxv. 19 f., only that in he latter case the 'house of Levi' is added. By the first we are o understand Israel as a whole, by the second the priests, and by the third proselytes—those who, though not of Abraham's eed, had his faith and inherited the promises made to him : see Kings viii. 41 ; Isa. lvi. 6 ; Acts x. 2, 22, &c.

12–18. *Jehovah has blessed, will bless, Israel.*

12. hath been mindful of us : LXX, Jero. render as a parti-iple : 'Jehovah having remembered us will bless us.'

Note the three classes : see on verses 9–11.

13. Both small and great : proselytes of every rank and osition. For this way of expressing totality see 2 Kings xviii. 4, &c.

14. This wish refers to the whole nation, and was very appro-

15 Blessed are ye of the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.
16 The heavens are the heavens of the Lord;
But the earth hath he given to the children of men.
17 The dead praise not the Lord,
Neither any that go down into silence;
18 But we will bless the Lord
From this time forth and for evermore.
Praise ye the Lord.

---

priate after the return from Babylon or after the decimation due to the Maccabean wars: cf. cxix. 87.

15. This verse expresses a wish as verse 14; render, 'May ye be blessed,' &c.

Which made heaven and earth: in contrast to idols, themselves the work of men's hands. Heaven and earth are thus separated as the abode respectively of God and man (but see on verse 3).

16. Heaven is Jehovah's, He dwells in it: but He has given to man the earth as a dwelling place. The rendering, 'the heaven of heaven belongs to Jehovah,' cannot be got out of the Hebrew, though it is that of the ancient versions.

17 f. A reason for praising Jehovah now. Soon we shall be in the silent land, still for ever. So let us praise Him now while we have life.

17. Note what is said of the dead, and see on lxxxvi. 13, lxxxviii. 10-13.

silence: a synonym for *Sheol.* Here and in xciv. 17 the LXX translates the word by 'Hades,' the Greek word for 'Sheol.' Cheyne (2) in both places substitutes the word rendered 'shadow of death' in cvii. 10, but on insufficient grounds.

The O. T. recognizes three places of abode:
(1) Heaven, where God and angels are.
(2) The earth, where man and animals live.
(3) Sheol (LXX *Hades*), whither men go after death.

Of a heavenly world in which redeemed man will dwell in the company of God and angels, or of a hell for the wicked, the O.T. says nothing; see Introd. pp. 14 ff.

18. From this time forth and for evermore = from the present moment until we die: the argument requires that 'for evermore' = 'until we enter the silent land, where all praise shall cease.'

Praise ye the LORD. This belongs to the beginning of Ps. cxvi, as in the LXX (not in Jero. also as Baethgen inaccurately says).

I love the LORD, because he hath heard 116
My voice and my supplications.
Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, 2
Therefore will I call *upon him* as long as I live.

PSALM CXVI.

Theme. The thanksgiving and vows of one who has been lelivered out of great distress.

I. *Title.* Praise-ye-Yah = Hallelujah.

II. *Contents.* (1) Acknowledgement of Jehovah's goodness in lelivering the singer out of some severe sickness, or from some ther situation of danger (verses 1–6).

(2) Vows and promises of thanksgiving for what Jehovah has lone (verses 7–19).

Observe the individualistic note that sounds throughout the Psalm. Vhatever may be said in regard to the congregational character f other Psalms (see Introd. p. 19 ff.), at least in this one the poet ells out his own personal experiences and feelings.

The division of this Psalm in the LXX into two (verses 1–9; erses 10–19), each beginning with 'Hallelujah' ('Alleluiah'), nd the uniting in the LXX of Pss. cxiv f. into a single Psalm, re both wrong as the contents of the Psalms prove, and both are robably due to liturgical considerations.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cxv.

Two features of the Psalm argue its late date: (1) its dependice on other Psalms. (2) The large number of Aramaisms hich it contains. No more definite statement can be hazarded.

1–6. *Jehovah's deliverance acknowledged.*

1. I love, &c.: The E.VV. give the sense and perhaps the iginal Hebrew text: but the present Hebrew text (M. T.) has love, because Jehovah has heard,' &c. After 'I love' the object ust in that case be understood from the next clause. In verse the object (*upon him*) after **call** has to be supplied from the ntext.

hath heard: a small letter written twice by mistake must be nitted. The versions, however, retain it and render, 'will ar': but the Psalmist is singing of the past.

My voice and my supplications: render, 'the voice of my pplication' with LXX, Jero., Pesh., and according to usage; see viii. 2, 6, xxxi. 22, cxxx. 2, cxl. 6.

2. call: an echo of xviii. 3. 'To call upon God' = to worship m.

The object—'upon Him'—must be supplied from the context.

3 The cords of death compassed me,
And the pains of Sheol gat hold upon me:
I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then called I upon the name of the Lord;
O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
Yea, our God is merciful.
6 The Lord preserveth the simple:
I was brought low, and he saved me.
7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death,

---

3. The cords of death compassed me: see on xviii. 4.

pains: *lit.* 'straitnesses': perhaps the plural is merel intensive, 'great distress.' A word corresponding to **cord** seems required here and in xviii. 4, but no successful attemp (Hupfeld, &c.) has so far been made to get such a word out of th M.T. As the verse stands death (=Sheol) is viewed under tw distinct figures.

Sheol: see on lxxxvi. 13.

4. called I: Heb. 'I continued to call.'

the name of the LORD: 'Jehovah as known.'

my soul: probably here = 'me' with emphasis on the pronoun see on cvii. 18, 26.

5 f. What the Psalmist found Jehovah to be.

5. See cxi. 4 and Exod. xxxiv. 6.

merciful: better, 'compassionate.'

6. simple: a great word in Proverbs: it denotes those wh have a character opposed to craftiness, underhandedness, schem ing; see Prov. xiv. 15, 18, xxii. 3, xxvii. 12.

7–19. *Vows and promises.*

7. Return: better, 'Turn,' which the verb primarily means 'Turn away, O my soul, from the things which disturb and distrac to Him who is thy rest.' We have similar soliloquies in Pss. xli xliii, ciii.

rest: in Hebrew plural, denoting perfect rest; the 'plural intensity.' The Hebrew word has reference, mainly, to thos outward conditions in a man's lot which make for restfulness such as prosperity, safety, &c.: see on lxxxiv. 4 (**Blessed**).

dealt bountifully: so xiii. 6, cxix. 17. The meaning of th phrase is 'to show kindness to.'

Mine eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
will walk before the LORD 9
n the land of the living.
believe, for I will speak: 10
was greatly afflicted:
said in my haste, 11
All men are a lie.
What shall I render unto the LORD 12
For all his benefits toward me?
will take the cup of salvation, 13
and call upon the name of the LORD.
will pay my vows unto the LORD, 14

In 8 f. the thought is that of lvi. 13, the words being largely orrowed; cf. xxvii. 13. The use of the words of lvi. 13 accounts r the otherwise unaccountable change of persons here, Jehovah eing addressed now in the second person.

8. thou hast delivered my soul . . . Mine eyes . . . my feet: e verb suits strictly the first object only: such 'anakoloutha' ound in Greek, Hebrew, and most languages.

9. In the land of the living: the sense is, 'in the land where ving people are,' as opposed to Sheol, 'the land of shades': now at Jehovah has kept me in this world alive, I will walk so as to ease Him.

10. The only translation which the M.T. can yield is this: 'I lieved (in Jehovah) (even) when I had to say, I am much licted.' For the rendering of the LXX, Jero. see 2 Cor. iv. 13.

11. 11^{a} is from xxxi. 22.

I (**said**): in Hebrew the pronoun is emphatic = 'as for me I.'

said: i. e. said inwardly, thought: so often in Hebrew. In ebrew 'I say' has frequently the sense 'I have it in mind,' purpose.'

in my haste: better, 'in my alarm,' as R.Vm.

All men are a lie: Heb. 'All men are lying,' 'break their rd,' 'are treacherous.'

12. Render: 'How can I requite Jehovah, For all his kind acts vards me!'

13. cup of salvation: the figure is obtained from the pouring out libations as a sacrifice to deity. The Psalmist will make an offer- in acknowledgement of the deliverance accorded by God.

14. This verse occurs also as verse 18. Here it is omitted in

Yea, in the presence of all his people.
15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of his saints.
16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant:
I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid;
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.
18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD,
Yea, in the presence of all his people;
19 In the courts of the LORD's house,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
Praise ye the LORD.

---

the LXX, though the other ancient versions have it. The same words are naturally suggested by what precedes in both cases, and we are probably to keep the two identical verses where they are.

The sense of the verse is, 'What I have vowed to Jehovah in the event of my being rescued from so great danger I will now pay.'

Probably the vows embraced sacrifices and gifts of money for the temple. Vows of this kind are still often made, especially by Roman Catholics.

in the presence of all his people: publicly, not in private.

15. Precious, &c.: what is precious is rare, and therefore much thought of. Jehovah does not regard the death of His favoured ones as a thing of no importance, as trivial, as cheap: it is much thought of, and will not be allowed unless strong reasons call for it.

saints: Heb. 'favoured ones,' objects of the Divine *Khesed* or lovingkindness: see vol. i. pp. 360 f., note B.

16. I am thy servant: repeated by a copyist's mistake. For **thy servant** see on lxxxvi. 2.

the son of thine handmaid: see on lxxxvi. 16; it is simply a variation (for the sake of the poetry) of **servant.**

18 = 14.

19. This verse requires for its full sense the preceding verse, so that verse 18 cannot be dispensed with even if verse 14 can.

courts: the house itself could be entered by priests only.

Praise ye the LORD: must be transferred to the commencement of Ps. cxvii (with the LXX).

O praise the LORD, all ye nations; 117
Laud him, all ye peoples.
For his mercy is great toward us; 2
And the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever
Praise ye the LORD.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: 118

PSALM CXVII.

Theme. Universal summons to praise Jehovah.

I. *Title.* Praise-ye-Yah (Hallelujah): see on cxvi. 19.

II. *Contents.* Verse 1 summonses all nations to praise Jehovah; verse 2 gives the reason for this.

III. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm belongs to the group Pss. cxiii–cxviii, which nearly all moderns rightly date in the late post-exilic period. Ewald, however, makes the present Psalm later than the rest.

1. Laud: the word in the M.T. occurs in the Aramaic and in late Hebrew in the sense 'to praise.'

2. mercy: Heb. 'lovingkindness.'

great toward us: read, 'higher than we' (deserve), changing the final consonant: the expression thus obtained occurs in ciii. 4, on which the present passage is based.

Praise ye the LORD: should be transferred to the beginning of Ps. cxviii as in the LXX.

PSALM CXVIII.

Theme. Song of thanksgiving for some recent national favour.

I. *Title.* **Praise ye the LORD:** Hallelujah: see on cxvii. 2.

II. *Contents.* This Psalm seems to have been composed to be ung antiphonally (see Pss. cxv, cxxxvi) during a procession nade to the temple in celebration of some recent blessing received rom Jehovah. The parts of the Psalm hang loosely together, as s commonly true of liturgical Psalms, but they may have been ivided as follows:—

1–18. Sung during the procession: in verses 1–4 the odd and ven lines by different sections of the choir: verse 19 sung outside ie principal gate of the temple, and verse 20 by a party of evites within: verses 21–25 sung as the procession passes irough the gate, verse 26 being sung by the Levites who seemed : first (verse 20) to challenge the admission of the procession:

For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
2 Let Israel now say,
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.

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verses 27–29 sung as the procession moved about in the temple area.

III. *Authorship and Date.* Though all commentators agree that the Psalm was called forth by some outstanding event there is great divergence of opinion as to what that event was, some holding that it was the reopening of the temple after the return from Babylon; others that it was its re-dedication after its desecration by the Syrians; while a large number from Hitzig to Duhm argue that it was some signal victory over the Syrian army. In the last case the procession would be a military and not a religious one. The dependence of this Psalm on other Psalms, its affinity with Ps. cxv and some late linguistic characteristics, prove the present Psalm to be late post-exilic.

Messianicity of the Psalm. A large number of Rabbinical authors and of the early Christian Fathers thought this Psalm primarily Messianic, and it has been so treated in modern times by Stier and others. Looking at the Psalm quite by itself one would have regarded it as called forth by the circumstances of the time, and as expressing the gratitude, joy, and faith of the writer and other pious Israelites. But it is cited in the N. T. in reference to our Lord: verse 22 is applied by the Master Himself to Himself[1], and the Apostle Peter applies the same words to Christ[2]. It is, however, a moot question whether, when O. T. passages are quoted with reference to N. T. persons or incidents, it is because the O. T. passages are supposed primarily to involve such reference. In many examples, at any rate, it is simply a case of analogy, the same principles being at work in the things compared; and it may, with the utmost accuracy, be said that what was taught in O. T. times is fulfilled and realized in N. T. history, even if the O. T. passages had originally no special reference to that with which, in the N. T., they are connected. See pp. 7 ff.

1–4. *General invitation to give thanks unto Jehovah.* A similar call to worship opens Psalms cvi f. and cxxxvi.

First all are summoned to give thanks: then the three classes named in cxv. 9–11 (see on).

1. for he is good, &c.: a common liturgical formula: see Jer. xxxiii. 11, and its beginning in Ps. lii. 9 (11).

2. Israel: LXX, 'house of Israel' as in cxv. 9. After **say** in 2^a,

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[1] Matt. xxi. 42 || Mark xii. 10 f. || Luke xx. 17.

[2] Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 11.

Let the house of Aaron now say, 3
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.
Let them now that fear the LORD say, 4
That his mercy *endureth* for ever.
Out of my distress I called upon the LORD: 5
The LORD answered me *and set me* in a large place.
The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: 6
What can man do unto me?
The LORD is on my side among them that help me: 7
Therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that
hate me.
It is better to trust in the LORD 8
Than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the LORD 9
Than to put confidence in princes.

3^a, 4^a the LXX adds 'that He is good,' the same words which in verse 1 are correctly translated there 'for He is good.' W. F. Cobb (*Book of Psalms,* 1905) states the contrary of the fact here.

5-9. *Jehovah's help in the past an encouragement to faith.*

5. Out of my distress: better, 'in my straitness,' i. e. when I was hemmed in, perplexed, the preposition which usually means 'from' has in Hebrew and in Greek often the meaning 'in': see on cviii. 12.

the LORD: Heb. 'Jah' ('Yah') in both cases: for this word see on lxxxix. 8. Some Jewish authorities including the Massorah, and, among moderns, Jastrow, think the letters forming *Jah* (*Yah*) at the end of verse 5 belong really to the noun rendered **large place**: but such a noun is never met with.

in a large place: figure for being in a state of ease and comfort: the opposite idea is conveyed by the phrase 'in a strait, narrow place': see on cvii. 6.

6. See lvi. 9^b, 11. This verse is cited in Heb. xiii. 6, from the LXX, which differs slightly from the M. T.

7. see *my desire* upon = (I shall) look with glee upon: see on cxii. 8.

8 f. For the thought see lxii, and cf. xxxiii. 16 ff., cxvi. 11, cxlvi. 3. Perhaps the civil authorities—Persians or Syrians—had in some way betrayed the trust of the Jews.

8. trust: Heb. 'take refuge.'

10 All nations compassed me about:
In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.
11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about:
In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.
12 They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns:
In the name of the LORD I will cut them off.
13 Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall:
But the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and song;

10–14. *Jehovah's help against hostile heathen peoples.*

10. All nations: better, 'All the heathen.'

In the name of the LORD: i. e. by the help of Jehovah. For name see on lxxix. 9. The Hebrew preposition rendered 'in' often means 'through,' 'by the help of': see lvi. 4, lx. 12, and cviii. 13.

I will cut them off: Heb. 'Certainly I will,' &c. The verb is the usual one employed for 'to circumcise,' but it has in this verse a slightly different form (*Hiph.*). There is here probably a word-play similar to that in Phil. iii. 2 (*katatome* and *peritome*): 'These our foes taunt us with being circumcised: I will concise them.' Hengstenberg renders, 'I will circumcise them,' i. e. I will compel them to become Jews: but most of the surrounding nations practised circumcision. Duhm reads, 'I will bring them down.'

11. They compassed me about: repeated for the metre.

12. like bees: foes are compared to bees in Deut. i. 44; cf. Verg., *Georg.* iv. 83, 235 ff., Homer, *Il.* xvi. 259 f.

as the fire of thorns: a thorn fire flares up suddenly, and it as suddenly burns itself out. Yet the following words show that utter extinction is not meant. The LXX reads, 'They surrounded me as bees do a honeycomb, and they burst into flame as fire among thorns.' The Hebrew consonants implied in the LXX do not differ greatly from those in the M. T., and this reading is probably nearer what was first written than the M. T.

13. Thou didst thrust sore at me: we must read with LXX, Jero., Pesh., ''twas thrust,' &c. The second person must refer to the enemy, and is quite out of place here.

14. the LORD: Heb. *Jah* (Yah): see on lxxxix. 8.

song: we must read 'my song,' with the ancient versions. The change involves the addition of one very small letter (*yodh*).

And he is become my salvation.
The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the 15
righteous:
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
The right hand of the LORD is exalted: 16
The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.
shall not die, but live, 17
ind declare the works of the LORD.
he LORD hath chastened me sore: 18
ut he hath not given me over unto death.
pen to me the gates of righteousness: 19
will enter into them, I will give thanks unto the LORD.

15–18. *Jehovah to be loudly praised for His goodness to the nation.*

15. rejoicing: Heb. 'ringing shouts of joy,' such as celebrate victory, and the like.

tents: render, 'dwellings': this word has been adduced to ow that the Psalm was made for the Feast of Tabernacles. But is a different Hebrew word (*sukkoth*) that is used for the booth elt in during that festival. The Hebrew word in the present rse (*'Ohel*) means primarily a tent such as Beduins have for eir movable home. Then it came to mean any dwelling, even ouse, after the canvas tent had yielded to a more solid and per-nent structure. So in cxxxii. 3 (see on); cf. Deut. xi. 45, 'David's *t*,' i. e. his palace: see xv. 1 (of God's dwelling), xix. 5, &c.

doeth valiantly: better, 'accomplishes valiant things.'

6. is exalted: render, with LXX, Pesh., 'exalts me.' The e,' though not in the Hebrew, would be understood.

7. The danger of dying is now past.

8. chastened: 'Jehovah has instructed me through suffering.' verb = 'to teach,' 'to discipline.'

9. The processional throng has now reached the temple gate.

Open to me: the singular applies to each one in the procession.

gates of righteousness: the gates through which, as from ovah's home, victory comes: for this sense of 'righteousness' on cxii. 3. Other explanations are (1) gates through which righteous alone should go; cf. Ps. xxiv (Kautsch); (2) gates ing to the abode of the God of righteousness; cf. xx. 2; xxi. 23.

the LORD: Heb. *Jah* (Yah): see on lxxxix. 8.

20 This is the gate of the Lord;
The righteous shall enter into it.
21 I will give thanks unto thee, for thou hast answered me,
And art become my salvation.
22 The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head of the corner.
23 This is the Lord's doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes.
24 This is the day which the Lord hath made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

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20. The reply of the Levites within the gate.

gate: the main entrance: in verse 19 the plural **gates** refers to the three main gates. This gate is the one before which the procession stood.

21–25. *The procession enters singing words of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah who has signally blessed the nation.*

21. art become my salvation = hast delivered me; see Exod. xv. 2.

22. head of the corner: the expression occurs nowhere else in the O.T., but wherever elsewhere the word 'corner' is used of a part of the building it refers to the foundation, the corner stone at the basis of the building and not one at the top: so Isa. xxviii. 16; Jer. li. 26. What is here meant is that large stone in the lowest layer of stones which binds two rows at right angles.

We have perhaps in this verse a proverbial saying, but in any case the general sense is clear enough. The nation (or the individual!) once despised has come to great honour and glory. It was natural to apply the words to Jesus Christ (see before), for though He came to His own, His own received Him not. Yet He has become to myriads the 'chiefest among ten thousand' and the 'altogether lovely.'

23. This is the LORD'S doing: Heb. 'From' (= through) 'Jehovah has this come about.' We are indebted for it all to Him, not to our courage or skill: see Neh. vi. 16.

24. Jehovah has granted us the deliverance or the victory which we this day celebrate.

in it: i. e. on the day: not in Him (Jehovah), cf. xxxii. 11; nor is 'in it' the object of the rejoicing as Hitzig and Duhm hold. It was not the day they rejoiced in, but the event commemorated on the day. The Hebrew can, however, yield any one of the three meanings.

Save now, we beseech thee, O Lord: 25
O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.
Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 26
We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.
The Lord is God, and he hath given us light: 27
Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the
altar.

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25. Save now: the Hebrew is the original of the word 'hosanna,' which occurs in the N. T. (Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 9 f., &c.), though in N. T. Greek it had some such sense as 'Glory be to': see Dalman (*Words of the Lord Jesus*, pp. 220 ff.). Since Christ cited parts of verses 25 f. when He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and since in the Hebrew liturgy the seventh day of Tabernacles is called 'Hosanna Rabba' ('the great Hosanna'), it has been concluded that this Psalm was composed for Tabernacles. But we are not told that Christ made that entry into Jerusalem during Tabernacles: and the above name for the feast does not meet us until long after Bible times.

send now, &c.: the same words in Neh. i. 11.

26. Sung by the Levites, who at first (verse 20) seem to refuse dmission to those forming the procession.

Blessed: an object of the Divine blessing: the Hebrew word endered 'blessed' (i. e. 'happy') in lxxxiv. 4 (see on) is not the ne used here.

in the name of the LORD: these words go with **blessed**: very one that enters the temple courts is blessed through Jehovah's ame, i. e. through Jehovah Himself; see Num. vi. 27; 2 Sam. i. 18.

27-29. *Sung by the choir at the head of the procession.*

27. given us light: in the metaphorical sense. The reference eems to be to Exod. xiii. 21: but cf. the priestly blessing, Num. i. 25.

Bind the sacrifice: render, 'Begin the (festive) dance.' The ebrew word rendered **sacrifice** has here its primary sense dance': 'bind' has its idiomatic sense in the phrase 'bind war[1]' = 'begin war,' i. e. gather together the soldiers for fighting). ence 'to bind a dance' is Hebrew idiom for 'to begin a dance.'

cords: *lit.* 'what is twisted': used of interwoven foliage in zek. xix. 11, &c. Ancient and modern authorities are fairly greed that the word here denotes those bundles of twigs from palm, illow, and myrtle trees which the Jews, from time immemorial,

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[1] See 1 Kings xx. 14, &c.

28 Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee:
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

119 ℵ ALEPH.

1 Blessed are they that are perfect in the way,

call 'lulabs[1].' These were brandished about the altar as they are in modern times about the bema during the festivals Tabernacles and Khanukah.

the horns of the altar: the narrow ledge surrounding the altar. H. R. S. Kennedy (*D.B.* i. p. 76) says, 'The view that these "horns" were originally projections to which the victims were bound has no better support than the corrupt passage Psalm cxviii. 27.'

This part of the verse may be thus rendered: 'Set a-going the (sacred) dance with your lulabs (in your hand), (even) up to the altar edge.'

28. See Exod. xv. 2. At the end of this verse the LXX repeats verse 21.

PSALM CXIX.

Theme. The preciousness of Jehovah's revelation.

I. *Title.* The M. T. has none, but in the LXX we find 'Hallelujah' or 'Praise-ye-Jah' (Yah).

II. *Contents.* This Psalm of 176 verses consists of a string of short sayings resembling proverbs, dealing with the value of God's word and the happiness which comes from its study and observance. According to the Massorah the law or the revealed will of Jehovah is referred to under some name or other in every verse except the 122nd. The Psalm is to a large extent an anthology of sayings current at the time, though the individual note has been introduced throughout, and many of the proverbs incorporated have no doubt been edited so as to make them reflect their age. There is but little logical connexion. That which holds the verses together is the external bond of the letters of the alphabet, each letter having eight verses given it, the key-letter beginning each of the eight verses. There is a good deal of repetition, and many of the sentences are jejune and commonplace—all which is what might be expected in a scheme which requires eight different statements about the same theme all commencing with the same letter.

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[1] Dalman (*Aramaic, &c. Lexicon*) and some others point it 'lolabs'; see 2 Macc. x. 7.

III. *Authorship and Date.* The following considerations argue or the Psalm in its present form a late date.

(1) The alphabetic arrangement.

(2) The tone of externalism which characterizes the piety enorced. The Exile in Babylon was traced by the nation in general o the neglect of religious duties: hence in post-exilic Biblical iterature these duties are emphasized very much.

(3) The prominence given to the Divine word accords well vith the period characterized by Scribism, a system in which nore attention was given to the preservation, interpretation, and tudying of the law than to its observance. The zeal for the aw of God which characterized the Maccabean revolt might well ave inspired the compilation and, in part, the composition of the resent Psalm. There are many peculiarities of style (see Hitzig) vhich require a late date. Earlier dates have been defended by engstenberg (about B. C. 560), Kirkpatrick (time of Nehemiah), aethgen, and Cheyne, both the latter deciding for the early reek period (say B. C. 250).

IV. *Structure and external form.* This Psalm is made up f twenty-two strophes or stanzas, corresponding to the number f letters (i. e. consonants[1]) in the Hebrew alphabet. Each trophe has eight lines, each of these beginning with that ebrew consonant after which (in English, &c.) the strophe named. No attempt to reproduce this acrostic arrangement other languages (e. g. Ewald, &c. in German) has approached uccess.

Duhm, Baethgen (3) and Cheyne (2) have adopted the following xplanation of the structure of the Psalm, put forth by Dr. D. H. üller of Vienna in his recent work on the Strophe-system of e Psalms—it is the explanation assumed by the present writer his notes: Ps. cxix is but an expansion of Ps. xix. 8–11 (originlly an independent Psalm). In the latter, eight separate words re employed for God's word, His revealed thought. The comiler and in part author of Ps. cxix, wishing to give great promience to the Divine word, put together twenty-two stanzas, in ach one of which every one of the terms designating that word Ps. xix. 8–11 is used. Unimportant changes in the text have be made in order to apply the principle rigidly, but with so much repetition of similar words some confusion was almost inevitable. See the notes.

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[1] Vowel signs proper were not introduced into Hebrew, Syriac, or rabic for some centuries after the Christian era set in. Yet good d Doctor Gill, even in the eighteenth century, held it to have been heresy very dangerous to faith to say that vowel letters are of later igin than the consonants. See *A Dissertation concerning the An-quity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel points and Accents*, vo, i–xliii, 1–282, 1767.

The following is a list of the eight terms referred to, followed immediately by the English word used for it in these notes. In each case it is the Divine word, the utterance of the Divine thought, that is meant, and the ordinary differences of meaning must not be unduly pressed: they express the same thing under various aspects.

1. *Tōrāh* (*lit.* 'instruction'): 'law'; see on lxxviii. 1.

2. *Eduth* (only plural in this Psalm): 'admonitions.' The word means literally a command given in the presence of witnesses. The Massorites, by the difference of one vowel, erroneously make two words of this one.

3. *Dābār*: 'word': what is spoken as such = Greek *epos*, though the LXX has sometimes *logos* for it.

4. *Piqqūd*: 'precept': a synonym for command, found nowhere outside the Psalter.

5. *Khōq*: 'statute': *lit.* 'what is engraved': so 'a law carved in stone or on metal': then simply 'statute.'

6. *Mitzwāh*: 'command,' see on lxxxi. 4.

7. *Mishpāṭ*: 'ordinance' (i. e. injunction) has the primary sense of a judicial decision in a particular case. Then since precedent becomes (customary) law, the word came to have the meaning it bears in this Psalm—'ordinance,' 'injunction.'

8. *Imrāh*: 'saying': denotes strictly 'word' with regard to its meaning; so = Greek *logos*. The LXX has for it the diminutive *logion*. It has often the sense 'promise.' But it is probably in this Psalm a mere variant of *dabar*.

It is not so much the written as the orally handed down word of God which forms the theme of this long Psalm. Reading and writing have never played a large part in the East, memory and tradition taking their place. There are unwritten Bibles in India, Africa, Arabia, &c.

The Tenses in this Psalm. The two forms of the Hebrew verb usually but inaccurately called *Tenses* denote strictly action completed (perf.) and not completed (impf.)[1]. The former is used throughout this Psalm in the sense of what in Hebrew Grammar is called the 'perfect of experience,' embracing what *has been* and *is*. The present tense in English best expresses this, and is adopted in these notes.

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[1] It was Ewald who first pointed out clearly the force of the two principal forms of the Semitic verb, wrongly called tenses: see *Heinrich Ewald: a Centenary Appreciation* (by the present writer), pp. 81 ff.

Who walk in the law of the LORD.
Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, 2
That seek him with the whole heart.
Yea, they do no unrighteousness; 3
They walk in his ways.
Thou hast commanded *us* thy precepts, 4
That we should observe them diligently.
Oh that my ways were established 5
To observe thy statutes!
Then shall I not be ashamed, 6

ALEPH.

1–8. *Desire for uprightness through obedience.*

1. Blessed: i. e. happy. See on lxxxiv. 4, and cf. note on xviii. 26.

perfect in the way: i. e. whose conduct is perfect; as close o the law as a sincere earnest man can make it.

Who walk, &c.: who keep within the limits of the law: to ransgress is to go outside, beyond (*trans*) it.

2. Blessed: 'happy.'

testimonies: render, 'admonitions.'

That seek him: see verse 10, and Deut. iv. 29. In the latter assage seeking Jehovah is the opposite of worshipping idols; hat is the sense of the expression here and in verse 10.

heart in the psychology of the Hebrews includes what in Kantian phraseology is called mind, i. e. feeling, intellect, and will. In lxxiii. 26 heart and flesh embrace the whole man. Dillmann and Driver say that in the O. T. the heart is the organ f the intellect alone; see Jer. v. 21; Hos. vii. 11. But in the resent verse and in verse 10 the wider sense is clearly inended.

3. his ways: read, 'His words': cf. verse 1. To walk in ehovah's word = to walk in His law. 'Ways' occurs in verse 5; words' occurs in no other part of the strophe. The Hebrew is uch the same for 'ways' and 'words.'

4. hast commanded: better, 'commandest'; see note on *he Tenses in this Psalm*, p. 254.

5. ways = conduct.

6. Then: referring back to verse 5.

ashamed: the verb has often the sense of 'to be foiled,' 'to ave one's efforts frustrated': 'I shall not fail in my efforts to bey if thou establish,' &c.

When I have respect unto all thy commandments.
7 I will give thanks unto thee with uprightness of heart,
When I learn thy righteous judgements.
8 I will observe thy statutes:
O forsake me not utterly.

ב BETH.

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.
10 With my whole heart have I sought thee:
O let me not wander from thy commandments.
11 Thy word have I laid up in mine heart,
That I might not sin against thee.

When I have respect to = 'when I look upon, with a view to keeping.'

7. judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

8. thy statutes: read, 'saying' (*imrah*). 'Statutes' has already occurred (see verse 5).

BETH.

9–16. *Longing to know and keep the law.*

9. Render: 'Whereby can a young man keep his course of life pure, So that he may guard it' (or 'himself') 'according to thy word?'

The second portion of the verse goes with the first as part of the question; see 4^a, 5^a.

The answer is obvious from the context; see especially verses 5, 10.

The object after 'guard' is 'his course of life' in 9^a, not himself (as Delitzsch, &c.). See Joshua vi. 18 for a similar use of the same verb.

word: read 'words' with the ancient versions and many Hebrew MSS.

10. heart: see on verse 2.

have I sought: render, 'do I seek'; see on verse 4.

let me not wander, &c.: some, following Aquila's rendering, think that sins of ignorance are meant: but the Hebrew = 'let me not go wrong,' 'go astray,' whether or not the cause be ignorance. Sins of ignorance are referred to in Lev. iv. 2, 13; Num. xv. 22.

11. have I laid: better, 'do I hide': see on verse 4. The verb is used of hiding away precious things, gold and the like.

Blessed art thou, O Lord: 12
Teach me thy statutes.
With my lips have I declared 13
All the judgements of thy mouth.
I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, 14
As much as in all riches.
I will meditate in thy precepts, 15
And have respect unto thy ways.
I will delight myself in thy statutes: 16
I will not forget thy word.

ג GIMEL.

Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live; 17
So will I observe thy word.
Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold 18

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12. Blessed = 'Praised be,' &c. The Hebrew word (*baruch*) is not that in verses 1 f.; see on lxxxiv. 4. It is nearly always optative in the form found here (pass. part.).

13. have I declared: 'do I recount'; see on verse 4.

judgements: 'ordinances.'

14. I have rejoiced: 'I rejoice': see on verse 4.

way: the course of life enforced in

testimonies: 'admonitions.'

As much as, &c.: changing one letter we get the far likelier rendering: 'More than in' (**all riches**), so Pesh. It was a small thing to say that he had as much joy in God's word as in riches.

in all riches: render, '(More than) under conditions of wealth of every kind.' So essentially LXX, Jero. The Hebrew preposition here translated 'in' is different from that in 14^{a}, and can hardly, in good Hebrew, be dependent on the verb 'rejoice.'

16. thy statutes: read, 'thy law': 'statutes' is found in verse 12: 'law' is not found elsewhere in this strophe.

GIMEL.

17–24. *Comfort in distress from God's word.*

17. Render: 'Grant to thy servant that I may live, So that I may keep thy words.'

Deal bountifully: see on cxvi. 7, where the same verb occurs. The above is the proper translation, 'grant,' &c.

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

18. Open: Heb. and LXX 'uncover,' 'unveil.' Take from my

Wondrous things out of thy law.
19 I am a sojourner in the earth:
Hide not thy commandments from me.
20 My soul breaketh for the longing
That it hath unto thy judgements at all times.
21 Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed,
Which do wander from thy commandments.
22 Take away from me reproach and contempt;

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eyes what prevents them from seeing the extraordinary things which thy law contains.

Wondrous things: see on lxxviii. 4.

19. 19^{a} is from xxxix. 12 (see on). The thought in the original passage is, 'Since I am but a stranger, a passing guest, let me have some joy before I go hence.'

sojourner: see on xciv. 6; the Hebrew word (*ger*) denotes a foreigner who has become a permanent resident in Palestine and has acquired substantial citizen rights. *Toshab* means a temporary resident only. The latter word is translated in the R. V. 'sojourner' in xxxix. 12, 'stranger' being the English word for *ger*. 'Naturalized citizens' might be used for *ger*, and 'sojourner' for *toshab*, though not with strict accuracy. In the present verse the *ger* (sojourner) is assumed to be under an obligation to keep the laws of His adopted country; hence the Psalmist, a *ger* in the earth, prays that he may have revealed to him the law of that God in whose land he dwells, so that he may keep it. In xxxix. 12 the reasoning is different: 'Spare me, for though a *ger* I have, as such, some claims upon thy consideration' (cf. Lev. xxv. 23): see Bertholet, *Die Stellung*, &c. 156 ff., and Driver on Deut. pp. 165 f.

20 gives the ground for the prayer in verse 19; render, 'My soul (=I myself) meditates longingly concerning thy ordinances all the time.'

breaketh: render, with Targ., 'meditates,' though the sense of the verb is variously given by the other versions and it is very uncertain. The same word in a different form (*hiph*) occurs in Lam. iii. 16.

21. Render: 'I have rebuked the arrogant; Cursed are they that wander from thy commandments.'

Thou hast rebuked: so the ancient versions, but the sense and the connexion (cf. verse 20 'my soul'='I myself') require the reading 'I have rebuked.'

cursed: wrongly joined by the Massorites, the Targ., and the E.VV. with the preceding.

22. If the rendering **thou hast rebuked** be retained in

For I have kept thy testimonies.
Princes also sat and talked against me: 23
But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.
Thy testimonies also are my delight 24
And my counsellors.

ד DALETH.

My soul cleaveth unto the dust: 25
Quicken thou me according to thy word.
I declared my ways, and thou answeredst me: 26
Teach me thy statutes.
Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: 27

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verse 21, then verse 22 means; 'Let me not be under the reproach involved in thy rebuke.'

Take away: the same verb as in verse 18, 'uncover.' But by changing one vowel (*gōl* for *gal*) we get 'roll away' (so xxxvii. 5, &c.). Reproach is conceived as a burden which Jehovah is entreated to roll away.

23. Render: 'Though (heathen) princes sat and talked together' (= 'schemed') 'against me, Thy servant' (i. e. 'I') 'meditated in thy statutes.'

24. Thy testimonies: 'thy admonitions.'

DALETH.

25-32. *Prayer to be taught the Divine law, for it sustains and comforts.*

25. My soul = I myself.

cleaveth unto the dust: a figure denoting intense grief; so xliv. 25. He has not the strength or heart to stand upright.

Quicken: see on lxxx. 18.

according to thy word: read, 'by means of thy word'; two very similar Hebrew letters (*b* and *k*) are confounded here, as frequently; God's word revives: see verses 50, 93.

26. I declared: better, 'I recounted.'

my ways: 'my life experiences.' 'Thou answeredst my prayers in regard to these; So answer me now when I pray to be taught thy statutes.' Answered prayer is with God a reason why other prayers should be answered.

27. The petition of 26ᵇ is repeated in different words with perhaps a word-play on **way**: 'I have recounted my ways; tell me now thine—the way of thy precepts.'

So shall I meditate of thy wondrous works.
28 My soul melteth for heaviness:
Strengthen thou me according unto thy word.
29 Remove from me the way of falsehood:
And grant me thy law graciously.
30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness:
Thy judgements have I set *before me.*
31 I cleave unto thy testimonies:
O Lord, put me not to shame.
32 I will run the way of thy commandments,
When thou shalt enlarge my heart.

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thy wondrous works: the same noun in Hebrew that is rendered in verse 18 **wondrous things** (see on).

28. melteth: 'I (my soul) am dissolving in tears.' See Job xvi. 20.

heaviness: Heb. 'grief,' 'sorrow.'

according unto thy word: read here as in verse 25, 'by means of thy word': so LXX here. See on verse 25.

thy word: read, 'precepts,' and so avoid the repetition of 'word' and secure one occurrence of 'precepts' (*piqqudim*) in this strophe.

29. way of falsehood: 'idolatry conceived as harlotry' is what is meant: a false way = 'religious practices involving unfaithfulness to Jehovah'; so verses 104, 128. Perhaps there is a reference to Jewish apostates of the writer's day.

30. way of faithfulness: the opposite of the way of falsehood (verse 29): 'I have chosen to be faithful to thee.'

have I set: read, with the change of one consonant, 'I have desired': cf. the parallel words 'I have chosen.'

***before me*:** not in the Hebrew, and a mere addition to make sense of the M. T. **have I set.**

31. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

put me not to shame: by letting me act inconsistently with thy law which I profess to follow.

32. Render: 'I run in the way of' (= enjoined by) 'thy commandments, Because thou dost give my heart free scope.'

enlarge: see on cvii. 6, and the rendering above. But 1 Kings v. 9 and the context make it likely that the verb here means 'to make wise,' here in God's law.

heart: see on verse 2.

ה HE.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; 33
And I shall keep it unto the end.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; 34
Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; 35
For therein do I delight.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, 36
And not to covetousness.
Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, 37
And quicken me in thy ways.
Confirm thy word unto thy servant, 38
Which *belongeth* unto the fear of thee.

HE.

33-40. *God's word promotes unselfishness and Godly fear.*

33. And I shall keep, &c.: render, 'So that I may attend to it as a reward.' The result of Jehovah's teaching is obedience, and this obedience is a reward from God.

unto the end: the one word in Hebrew so rendered is in xix. 11 rightly translated 'reward.' By itself it never means 'unto the end,' unless that is the case here and in verse 112 (see on). The keeping of the law is a reward in itself. In xix. 11 the reward is something which follows obedience: here it is obedience itself.

34. and I shall keep, &c.: better, 'so that I may keep thy law and observe it,' &c.

heart: see on verse 2.

36. testimonies: 'admonitions.'

covetousness: *lit.* 'gain': then 'love of gain,' as here.

37. beholding: the Hebrew means probably 'looking complacently (or 'with pleasure') upon,' though the Hebrew for this has usually a preposition (*b*) which is here lacking; see on cxii. 8.

vanity: *lit.* 'nothingness': here idols are meant. So xxiv. 4; Jer. xviii. 15, &c. 'Prevent me from gazing approvingly upon the idols around.'

38. word: better, 'saying': the Hebrew word often = 'promise.' So here: see below.

servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

Which *belongeth*, &c.: render, 'Which belongs to those who

39 Turn away my reproach whereof I am afraid;
For thy judgements are good.
40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts:
Quicken me in thy righteousness.

ו VAU.

41 Let thy mercies also come unto me, O LORD,
Even thy salvation, according to thy word.
42 So shall I have an answer for him that reproacheth me;
For I trust in thy word.
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth;
For I have hoped in thy judgements.
44 So shall I observe thy law continually

---

fear thee.' The abstract noun **fear** has often the concrete sense as here. The word 'belongeth' is implied in the Hebrew, and should not therefore be italicized.

39. my reproach: the obloquy and scorn heaped upon Him for adhering to the true religion; see verses 23 f., 42.

judgements: better, 'ordinances,' not as some explain here, 'judicial sentences.' The Hebrew word is throughout this Psalm one of the eight synonyms for Jehovah's revealed will.

40. Quicken me: see on lxxx. 18.

in thy righteousness: render, 'by thy righteousness,' i. e. by imparting to me the rightness of life which thy law makes obligatory. The whole drift of the Psalm shows that this must be the sense here. Revival comes through the word, through conformity to the Divine law: see verses 25, 50, 93.

WAW (R. V. VAU).

41-48. *Prayer for strengthening of faith.*

41. word: Heb. *imrah*: 'saying.'

42. him that reproacheth me: i. e. with believing in a false God. Jehovah's deliverance would be the Psalmist's vindication. If the reproachers are faithless Israelites, that deliverance would be a vindication of the claims of the orthodox Jewish party.

43. The negative side of what is said in verses 41 f. If Jehovah does not endorse the Psalmist's doctrine by some manifestations o power and favour, the word of truth is virtually snatched out of his mouth.

Verses 44-46 are made up of sentences which express either purpose ('telic') or result ('ecbatic'), probably the latter.

For ever and ever.
And I will walk at liberty; 45
For I have sought thy precepts.
I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings, 46
And will not be ashamed.
And I will delight myself in thy commandments, 47
Which I have loved.
I will lift up my hands also unto thy commandments, 48
which I have loved;
And I will meditate in thy statutes.

ז ZAIN.

Remember the word unto thy servant, 49
Because thou hast made me to hope.

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44. For ever and ever: i. e. for the rest of his life: nothing beyond death is contemplated.

45. at liberty: Heb. 'in a broad place,' free from all restraint; see on cvii. 6.

I have sought: better, 'I seek': see on verse 4. 'Thou art the only God whose commands I attend to.'

46. kings: kings in general are probably meant, and not the Persian or Syrian kings. We have notable examples of this fearless attitude in Daniel, in the Maccabean heroes, in Luther, and in John Knox: see Matt. x. 18; Acts xxvi. 1 f., and see on cxxxviii. 1.

47. I have loved: better, 'I love': see on verse 4. The LXX add to the verb the adverb 'much.'

48. I will lift up my hands: this is an attitude of prayer: see xxviii. 2, lxiii. 5, cxxxiv. 2, cxli. 2. We have here, according to Duhm, the first hint at that worship of the written word, the law, which in later Judaism became common. Probably, however, nothing more is meant than the lifting up of the heart; see Lam. iii. 41. Perhaps for **hands** we should read 'heart': the two Hebrew words are easily confounded.

commandments: this word occurs in verse 47: read, 'statutes.'

ZAIN.

49-56. *The comfort and joy of God's word.*

49. the word: read (with the versions), 'thy word,' i.e. 'thy promise.'

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

Because: the A. V. and R.Vm. 'Upon which' has the support

50 This is my comfort in my affliction :
For thy word hath quickened me.
51 The proud have had me greatly in derision :
Yet have I not swerved from thy law.
52 I have remembered thy judgements of old, O LORD,
And have comforted myself.
53 Hot indignation hath taken hold upon me,
Because of the wicked that forsake thy law.
54 Thy statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night,
And have observed thy law.

---

of the LXX, Pesh., Jero. : but the R. V. correctly renders the Hebrew, as do Aq., Sym., &c. The Hebrew word has the same sense in Deut. xxix. 24, &c.

hast made : better, 'makest' : see on verse 4. The thought is, 'Thou causest us by thy promise to have hope in thee ; forget not that promise lest we be disappointed.'

50. Render : 'This is my consolation in my affliction—That thy word revives me.'

51. thy law : read, 'thy commandments.' 'Law' occurs thrice in this strophe in the M. T. : 'commandments' and 'admonitions' not at all : they must be restored.

52. I have remembered : better, 'I remember.'

judgements : better, 'ordinances.'

of old: referring to the ordinances: they belong to the long ago.

have comforted : better, 'comfort.'

53. the wicked that forsake, &c. : the Jews who have turned their backs upon the faith of their fathers in order to win the smiles and escape the smitings of our Syrian (or Persian, or Greek ?) oppressors.

54. my songs : the theme of my songs.

house of my pilgrimage : the place where I am a *ger* ; see on verse 19. In the latter verse he wishes to know God's law, because he is a citizen—a *ger*—in God's land. Now he says he sings about that law, so great is his joy in it.

55. remembered : better, 'I think about,' the primary sense of the verb.

name = 'revealed character.'

thy law : read, 'thy admonitions' : see on verse 51.

This I have had, 56
Because I kept thy precepts.

ח CHETH.

The LORD is my portion: 57
I have said that I would observe thy words.
I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: 58
Be merciful unto me according to thy word.
I thought on my ways, 59
And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
I made haste, and delayed not, 60
To observe thy commandments.
The cords of the wicked have wrapped me round; 61
But I have not forgotten thy law.

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56. This, &c.: read (with LXX, Pesh., &c.), 'This has been my consolation'—restoring a word which has apparently dropped out.

Because: render, 'That,' &c., as in verse 50.

KHETH.

57-64. *The Psalmist's fidelity to Jehovah's law even when he is persecuted.*

57. Render: 'My portion, O Jehovah, I have (inwardly) said, is, to keep thy words.'

The R.V., though supported by the Hebrew accents, makes a wrong division of the words in the verse. The attachment professed throughout this Psalm is to Jehovah's law, and not to Jehovah Himself. It should be remembered that the so-called Hebrew accents (not older than about A. D. 700), besides usually indicating the place of the tone, are also punctuation marks.

I have said: i. e. inwardly, 'I say to myself.'

58. Be merciful: better, 'Be gracious to': so M. T., LXX, Jero., Targ. We should, however, probably read with Pesh. 'revive me.'

59-61. The past tenses of the R. V. should be all changed to the present: 'I think' . . . 'turn' . . . 'make haste,' &c.: see p. 254 (*The Tenses*, &c.).

59 f. When he gave heed to his manner of life he saw its defects, and took pleasure in subjecting it to the norm of the Divine law.

61. Even when entrapped by the wicked, i. e. when treacherously betrayed to the Syrian (or Persian, or Greek?) rulers, he held fast to his religion.

62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee
Because of thy righteous judgements.
63 I am a companion of all them that fear thee,
And of them that observe thy precepts.
64 The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy :
Teach me thy statutes.

ט TETH.

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,
O Lord, according unto thy word.
66 Teach me good judgement and knowledge ;
For I have believed in thy commandments.
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray ;
But now I observe thy word.

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62. judgements : better, ‘ordinances.’

63. companion : Heb. ‘a member of the same party,’ ‘clu &c. In post-Biblical Hebrew the word came to mean ‘a memb of the same society, club, &c., whether literary, philanthropic, religious.’ It was also in the Jewish schools a title of distincti for a student : cf. the use of ‘fellow’ in the Welsh and oth universities.

TETH.

65–72. *Jehovah's dealings are all full of love.*

65. hast dealt well with : better, ‘showest kindness to,’ s on cxvi. 7.

thy servant : see on lxxxvi. 2.

thy word : i. e. ‘thy promise,’ as in verse 49.

66^a means ‘Teach me to have a keen sense of the requir ments of thy law, and to be able to realize them in my conduct.’

66. good judgement : *lit.* ‘goodness of discernment,’ i. power of accurately discerning (what thy law involves).

knowledge : the cognate Hebrew verb (‘to know’) has oft befor other verbs the force of the French *savoir*, i. e. ‘to be abl (to speak, practise, &c.). Here the noun denotes skill in applyi the Divine law to the life of every day.

67. The idea in 67^a is, ‘My sin brought on my sufferin The belief in the close connexion between sin and suffering w very prevalent among the Jews ; cf. the teaching of Job's thr friends, and see John ix. 1 ff. There is, of course, a very r sense in which suffering leads to amendment of life, but that not the thought here.

Thou art good, and doest good; 68
Teach me thy statutes.
The proud have forged a lie against me: 69
With my whole heart will I keep thy precepts.
Their heart is as fat as grease; 70
But I delight in thy law.
It is good for me that I have been afflicted; 71
That I might learn thy statutes.
The law of thy mouth is better unto me 72
Than thousands of gold and silver.

׳ JOD.

Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: 73

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68. good = 'kind': so often in the O. T.

doest good = 'actest in a kind way.'

statutes: read, 'ordinances,' which otherwise would not occur in this strophe.

69. have forged, &c.: render: 'cover me over with falsehoods,' i.e. 'they (the proud) give me a character that is not my own.' The Hebrew verb used here means 'to besmear,' 'to cover over'—so the Aramaic and Assyrian cognates: but it never has the sense 'to forge': see Peake on Job xiii. 4, in this series of Commentaries.

70. Render: 'Their heart is gross, as with fat,' &c.: see on lxxiii. 7. The stunting of the moral sense is often connected with physical depletion: see xvii. 10, &c. Cf. the principle involved in asceticism.

law: read, 'admonitions.'

71. The sense is; 'The affliction brought on by my sin turned out for my good, for thereby learned I thy law.' Many interpret verse 67 in a similar way (see note on).

I have been afflicted: better perhaps, 'I am afflicted': see on verse 76.

72. thousands of gold and silver: i. e. 'thousands of gold and silver pieces,' or 'coins.' The Hebrew words for gold and silver are constantly used by themselves, for the gold and silver shekel (value about £2 1*s.* and 2*s.* 9*d.* respectively). Perhaps here we are to understand gold and silver pieces in general.

JOD.

73-80. *Prayer for instruction and deliverance.*

73. have made, &c.: the verbs here seem to be past in sense. 73[a] is from Job x. 8, cf. also Deut. xxxii. 8; Job xxxi. 15.

Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.
74 They that fear thee shall see me and be glad;
Because I have hoped in thy word.
75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgements are righteous,
And that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.
76 Let, I pray thee, thy lovingkindness be for my comfort,
According to thy word unto thy servant.
77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live:
For thy law is my delight.
78 Let the proud be ashamed; for they have overthrown me wrongfully:

'Since thou hast made and constituted me as I am, complete thy work by giving me understanding of thy law.'

74. Render: 'May those who fear thee, see me and be glad,' &c., i. e. 'When they see me may they have cause for joy in the faith which I have in thy law.' The verse stands in close connexion with the preceding 'give me understanding,' &c.

75. judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

righteous: i. e. 'faithful,' as in Isa. xl ff. The Hebrew word is a noun. In Semitic, nouns are constantly employed instead of adjectives.

hast afflicted: better perhaps, 'afflictest,' see on verses 59-61, and on verses 67 and 71.

76. The sense is: 'Show me thy lovingkindness so that I may (thereby) be comforted.' This verse suggests present affliction: perhaps therefore in verses 71 and 75 we should translate **I have been afflicted,** &c. by the present tense: see on these verses.

77. The ground of the prayer in 77[a] is the writer's delight in God's law. The claim to personal integrity pervades this Psalm, as also the speeches of Job: but see on verse 67.

tender mercies: better, 'compassions': the same word occurs in verse 156.

78. be ashamed: 'be foiled,' 'frustrated,' a common meaning of the verb.

they have overthrown me wrongfully = 'they have wronged me (at law) by making false accusations against me.' The verb rendered 'overthrow' is used in Job viii. 5 and xxxiv. 12 of 'perverting' (lit. 'twisting') justice.

wrongfully: Heb. 'with falsehood' (adverbial accusative),

But I will meditate in thy precepts.
Let those that fear thee turn unto me, 79
And they shall know thy testimonies.
Let my heart be perfect in thy statutes; 80
That I be not ashamed.

כ CAPH.

My soul fainteth for thy salvation: 81
But I hope in thy word.
Mine eyes fail for thy word, 82
While I say, When wilt thou comfort me?
For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; 83
Yet do I not forget thy statutes.
How many are the days of thy servant? 84

'with false accusations.' Hupfeld and Wellhausen explain 'without cause,' making it equivalent to the word *Khinam*: see on verses 86, 118.

79. And they shall know: better, 'And those who know,' &c. So M. T. (*qr.*) and the ancient versions, including the Targ. The *keth.* may mean 'That they may know,' but Kirkpatrick errs in adducing the Targ. for this rendering; see above.

CAPH.

81–89. *The Psalmist is in great distress, but he holds fast to Jehovah's commandments and seeks protection.*

81. fainteth: *lit.* 'comes to an end': cf. the English 'I am dying for.'

82. fail: the same verb is translated **fainteth** in verse 81 (see on). The words **soul** (81) and **eyes** have here the force of strong personal pronouns, as often in Semitic: '*I* faint for thy salvation' (81), 'thy word' (82). In both verses the thought is of the exhaustion due to 'hope deferred.'

83. a bottle in the smoke: the Psalmist complains that he is shrivelled up by suffering as a skin bottle is in an Eastern house under the action of smoke. Eastern houses rarely have chimneys, so that the smoke of the charcoal and fire affects the articles in the house very much. Most of the ancient versions have 'like a wineskin in hoar-frost.'

84. How many: here, as often, the expression means 'How few,' 'few at the most': 'Seeing that my life is at best but short, let justice be done me soon, or it may be too late.'

For **the days of thy servant** Baethgen reads 'my days'

When wilt thou execute judgement on them that persecute
me?
85 The proud have digged pits for me,
Who are not after thy law.
86 All thy commandments are faithful:
They persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.
87 They had almost consumed me upon earth;
But I forsook not thy precepts.

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to suit the metre: but this does not help or even suit the metre, and no change is necessary.

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

execute judgement: we must understand 'judgement' in the sense which the word has in this Psalm, viz. 'ordinance,' 'injunction.' So 'to execute judgement' = 'to carry out the principles of justice ordained by Jehovah, and forming an integral part of the law.'

85. Render: 'The arrogant dig pits for me (viz. those), Who do not conform to thy law.' The LXX for **pits** has 'frivolous tales,' reading *sikhot* for *shikhot* (*s* for *sh*); in unpointed Hebrew the words would be written the same. For **digged** the LXX has 'related.' This version renders the verse, 'Transgressors have told me frivolous tales, but not as thy law, O Lord.'

Who are not, &c.: the relative can refer to the proud (haughty) only, and not, as in Sym., Jero., Targ., to the **pits** ('which are,' &c.). Nor does the relative (the Hebrew = 'who' or 'which') stand for the whole statement in 85^a as in LXX, Pesh. Baethgen misrepresents the evidence of the versions here, as Kirkpatrick does on verse 79. It would be a paltry truism and off the line of thought to say that digging pits for good people is against the Divine law.

86. faithful: Heb. 'faithfulness' (a noun); see on verse 75 ('righteous').

wrongfully: same sense as in verse 78 (see on): they utter falsehoods in order to incriminate me—their only way of attaining that end.

87. consumed: better, 'made an end of.' 'They had come near to killing me.' It is the transitive (*Pi*) form of the verb found in verses 81 (**fainteth**) and 82 (**fail**).

upon earth: where he lives, in contrast with Sheol whither the shades of the departed go. For other explanations see the larger commentaries. Duhm, &c. reject the clause.

Note in 87^b the Psalmist's consciousness of integrity; see on verse 77.

Quicken me after thy lovingkindness ; 88
So shall I observe the testimony of thy mouth.

ל LAMED.

For ever, O LORD, 89
Thy word is settled in heaven.
Thy faithfulness is unto all generations : 90
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
They abide this day according to thine ordinances ; 91
For all things are thy servants.
Unless thy law had been my delight, 92
I should then have perished in mine affliction.
I will never forget thy precepts ; 93
For with them thou hast quickened me.

LAMEDH.

89-96. *Jehovah's word abides : He Himself is faithful.*

89. Render : 'For ever, O Jehovah, is thy word : It is firmly fixed in the heavens.' The Hebrew accents require the following rendering : 'For ever is Jehovah : thy word is,' &c., but the sudden transition from the third person ('Jehovah') to the second (**thy word**) is strange and improbable. The translation proposed above has the support of Pesh. and of most moderns.

in heaven : beyond the reach of earthly changes ; see on lxxxix. 2 ; cf. lxxii. 5.

90 f. The constancy of God's work in nature, a pledge of His unchanging faithfulness.

90. Thy faithfulness : read, 'thy saying' (*imrah*).

91. Render : 'The day and the night abide according to thy ordinances ; For all things (in the material universe) are thy servants.' The (**this**) **day** occurring in the M. T. by itself is suspicious : on the basis of lxxiv. 16 Ewald suggested that 'and the night' has fallen out. His rendering is, 'The day and the night wait on thy judgements' ; but the verb **abide** must have here the same sense as in verse 90 : it means literally 'to stand.'

all things : Heb. 'the whole,' 'the totality of things.' If the M. T. is kept, render 'With reference to thy ordinances they abide this day,' &c. So R.Vm.

92 f. He is indebted to the law for victory and revival.

93^{b}. Cf. l. 6.

94 I am thine, save me;
For I have sought thy precepts.
95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me;
But I will consider thy testimonies.
96 I have seen an end of all perfection;
But thy commandment is exceeding broad.

מ MEM.

97 Oh how love I thy law!
It is my meditation all the day.
98 Thy commandments make me wiser than mine enemies;
For they are ever with me.
99 I have more understanding than all my teachers;

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94. save: *lit.* 'put me in a wide place' = set me at large, give me a wide berth; see on cvii. 6. The root of the verb here used is that in 'Jesus' and 'Joshua' (=*lit.* 'one that sets at large').

sought: Heb. 'inquired into,' 'studied'; see on cv. 4.

precepts: read, 'statutes.'

95. have waited: in a hostile sense (so lvi. 7).

96. perfection: read (with trivial changes in the Hebrew) the word found in Job xi. 7 and xxvi. 11, meaning 'the farthest limit,' 'the remotest point in space.' See Budde and Marshall on these Job passages. The sense of this verse seems to be: The horizon bounds my vision of space: my farthest visible point is bounded: but God's commandment is **exceeding broad,** i. e. without end. In Job xi. 9 the same adjective is applied to the Almighty.

MEM.

97–104. *God's word the source of the highest wisdom.*

98. Render: 'Thy commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, For it is my possession for ever.' The singular 'commandment' seems required by the grammar, though not necessarily. The A. V. and R.Vm. 'thou through,' &c. follow the LXX, Jero.

99. Duhm laughs at the thought that such a fool as the writer should have more discernment than his teachers. Alas for the teachers! But he might have saved his laugh, for the superior wisdom claimed has to do exclusively with the Divine law as a guide for life: and of this the pupil might well have known more than his teachers, who were probably Greeks appointed by the Syrian government to instruct the Jews in the religion and philosophy

For thy testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged, 100
Because I have kept thy precepts.
I have refrained my feet from every evil way, 101
That I might observe thy word.
I have not turned aside from thy judgements; 102
For thou hast taught me.
How sweet are thy words unto my taste! 103
Yea, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth!
Through thy precepts I get understanding: 104
Therefore I hate every false way.

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of the dominant power. The teaching of the law, and even of Hebrew, was suppressed by the Syrians.

In *Pirqe Aboth* (a Mishna tract) verse 99^a is quoted and explained as meaning, 'From all my teachers I have gotten understanding' (see iv. 1). But in the present verse the comparative is required by the sense, though the Hebrew allows the other translation.

testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

100. Knowledge of the law comes by obeying it: cf. *solvitur ambulando.*

I have kept: better, 'I keep.'

precepts: read, 'statutes.'

101. I have refrained: better, 'I refrain' (=hold back).

every evil way: i. e. 'evil conduct of every kind.' Baethgen unnecessarily excludes the verb in 101^b, rendering 'on account of thy word': but metre requires not the exclusion, as he assumes, but the retention of the verb, if we make the verse a distich as we should.

102. Jehovah has been his real teacher in the law. How? Through His law. So we have the apparent paradox: Through His law Jehovah teaches the Psalmist to keep the law. No inner teacher is in question here. The Divine word is its own interpreter.

103. sweet: Heb. 'smooth,' then 'agreeable.' In xix. 10 we have the same thought, but the adjective rendered 'sweet' is from a wholly different root.

thy words: better, 'thy sayings.'

104. false way: perhaps 'false religion' is meant: see Acts ix. 2 for this sense of 'way.' The word 'way' may have this sense also in verse 101.

נ NUN.

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path.
106 I have sworn, and have confirmed it,
That I will observe thy righteous judgements.
107 I am afflicted very much:
Quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.
108 Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth,
O LORD,
And teach me thy judgements.
109 My soul is continually in my hand;
Yet do I not forget thy law.
110 The wicked have laid a snare for me;
Yet went I not astray from thy precepts.

NUN.

105–112. *God's word gives light and joy.*

105. feet: so LXX, Pesh.: but the M.T., Targ., Jero. hav 'foot.'

path: so M.T., Targ., Jero., but in LXX, Pesh. 'paths.'

God's word gives guidance at all time: in the night it is as lamp; in the day as the light of the sun.

106. and have confirmed it: read (with Jero., Calvin, Baethgen, &c.), 'and will confirm it.' But LXX, Pesh., Targ., and M.T., and most moderns, support the R.V. In the Hebrew the difference is in one vowel only. 'Confirm,' i. e. ratify.

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

108. Accept: *lit.* 'be pleased with,' 'accept as satisfactory' so l. 18.

freewill offerings: sacrifices spontaneously presented.

freewill offerings of my mouth: i. e. my prayers an praises: see l. 14, li. 19; Heb. xiii. 15.

judgements: read 'commandments': see verse 106.

109. My soul . . . in my hand: i. e. 'I am in danger of losin my life': the same idiom in Judges xii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5, xxviii 21; Job xiii. 4. The LXX renders 'My life is continually i thy hands,' missing the sense of the Hebrew.

Yet do I not, &c.: the usual profession of integrity.

110. Yet went I not astray: see verse 176.

Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; 111
For they are the rejoicing of my heart.
I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes, 112
For ever, even unto the end.

ס SAMECH.

I hate them that are of a double mind; 113
But thy law do I love.
Thou art my hiding place and my shield: 114
I hope in thy word.
Depart from me, ye evil-doers; 115
That I may keep the commandments of my God.
Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live; 116
And let me not be ashamed of my hope.

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111. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

have I taken, &c.: for the verb we should probably substitute a noun with the same consonants: render then 'Thy admonitions are my inheritance for ever.' Instead of Canaan, an inheritance now under foreign domination, the pious Israelite boasted of an eternal, inalienable inheritance—the law of God. In xvi. 5 f. Jehovah is Himself the inheritance of Israel.

112. For ever . . . end: render, 'as an eternal reward'; see on verse 33. The mention in verse 111 of an inheritance in the law naturally suggests the thought of an eternal reward, the reward consisting of obedience to the law.

SAMEKH.

113–120. *Security in Jehovah's law from unbelief and ruin.*

113. them that are of a double mind: read (changing the vowels only), 'schismatics,' 'apostates.' The reference is to those who had joined the Greek (or Samaritan?) party. The ancient versions miss the sense of the Hebrew.

114. my hiding place: where I am safe because unseen: see xxvii. 5, xxxii. 7, lxi. 2, xci. 1: the thought is safety.

my shield: to protect me; my defence: see iii. 3, vii. 10, xviii. 2, 30.

115. The first part of the verse follows vi. 8^{a}.

116. according unto: read (with Aq., Pesh., Targ.), 'by means of' (**thy word**), changing Hebrew *k* to *b* which are much alike.

be ashamed: i. e. be disappointed in what I hoped for; see Isa. i. 29, xx. 5, &c.

117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe,
And shall have respect unto thy statutes continually.
118 Thou hast set at nought all them that err from thy statutes;
For their deceit is falsehood.
119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross:
Therefore I love thy testimonies.
120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee;
And I am afraid of thy judgements.

ע AIN.

121 I have done judgement and justice:
Leave me not to mine oppressors.
122 Be surety for thy servant for good:

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117. and I shall be safe: better, 'so that I may be set in a free (unrestrained) place': see on verse 94 and on cvii. 6.

And shall have respect, &c.: read (with the ancient versions), 'Then shall I delight myself in thy statutes continually.'

118. set at nought: better, 'rejected,' 'cast away': so Jero., Pesh. and the cognate verb in Assyrian. The Hebrew word occurs here only.

statutes: read, 'precepts.'

their deceit: read (with LXX, Jero., Pesh., &c., changing one consonant), 'their conversation.'

falsehood: i.e. 'false,' noun for adjective as often in Hebrew: see on verse 75 (**righteous**).

119. Thou puttest away, &c.: read (making slight changes), 'I have counted all the wicked of the earth as dross.' So the LXX: but the other Greek versions Aq. and Sym. and also Jero. read, 'Thou hast counted,' &c.

120. trembleth: Heb. 'stands up as hair when one shudders': see Job iv. 15, 'my flesh creeps.'

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

AIN.

121–128. *Confidence expressed that Jehovah will stand by His servant.*

121. Render: 'I have performed what was ordained (by thee) and what is just,' &c.

122. Render: 'Give thy word as surety' (=pledge thy word) 'for my well-being,' &c.

thy servant: read, 'thy word.' If the M.T. is followed, one of the eight synonyms for God's law is lacking in this strophe.

Let not the proud oppress me.
Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, 123
And for thy righteous word.
Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, 124
And teach me thy statutes.
I am thy servant, give me understanding; 125
That I may know thy testimonies.
It is time for the Lord to work; 126
For they have made void thy law.
Therefore I love thy commandments 127
Above gold, yea, above fine gold.
Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all *things* 128
  to be right;
And I hate every false way.

פ PE.

Thy testimonies are wonderful: 129

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123. fail: see on verse 82: 'I am dying for thy deliverance,' 'thy enlargement'; see on verse 94 and on cvii. 6.

125. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

126. to work: the Hebrew verb is used absolutely for 'to execute judgement,' 'to administer justice by punishing the wicked'; so in Jer. xxviii. 23 and in Ezek. xxxi. 11. The second part of the verse shows that this is the sense to be understood here.

127. Render: 'Above everything I love thy commandments; Above gold and fine gold.'

Therefore: read (changing the last consonant), 'Above everything.'

gold: render, 'fine gold'; see xix. 11.

128. Render (making slight textual changes): 'Therefore I have walked in a straight way, according to thy precepts: Every false way' (=faith) 'I hate.'

esteem: the Hebrew verb can only mean 'to walk in a straight way,' supplying the object, as must often be done in Hebrew: see 1 Sam. vi. 12, &c.

PE.

129–136. *Guidance through the word.*

129. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

wonderful: the word (a noun) used in lxxii. 12, lxxxviii. 10

Therefore doth my soul keep them.
130 The opening of thy words giveth light;
It giveth understanding unto the simple.
131 I opened wide my mouth, and panted;
For I longed for thy commandments.
132 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me,
As thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.
133 Order my footsteps in thy word;
And let not any iniquity have dominion over me.
134 Redeem me from the oppression of man:
So will I observe thy precepts.

(see on), lxxxix. 5. The Hebrew word rendered 'wonderful things' in verse 18 has the same root.

130. opening: Heb. 'door,' 'doorway.' Here the latter is meant. In Palestine houses are mostly windowless, the light entering through the doorway. Light comes through God's word as the sun's light through an eastern door.

simple: in Heb. 'doorway' and 'simple' are much alike, and a word play is intended: cf. English, 'The *door* gives light to the *dull*.' On the meaning of 'simple' see on cxvi. 6.

131. I opened wide my mouth: an attitude of expectancy; see Job xxix. 23; cf. lxxxi. 10.

panted: fig. for 'eagerly desired.'

I longed: an Aramaic word found nowhere else in the O. T.

132. Turn, &c.: God conceived of as turned away in anger.

As thou usest to do: Heb. 'According to (thy) ordinance'; the noun used in lxxxi. 4 and there so translated (see on). He pleads not custom, but God's own ordained principles.

thy name: 'Thee, as thou art revealed.'

133. Order: better, 'direct' or 'guide.'

footsteps: the Hebrew word means also 'feet,' and it is so rendered in lxxiv. 3: it occurs also in cxl. 5, &c.

iniquity: the Hebrew word means strictly 'naughtiness': then 'wickedness' in general. In Hos. xii. 2; Isa. xli. 29, &c., the word denotes idolatry, and it may have that meaning here. 'Do not let me come under the sway of any one of these Syrian idols.'

134. Redeem: see on lxxiv. 2.

So will I, &c. better, 'So that I may keep thy precepts.' The oppression was a hindrance to his obedience.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; 135
And teach me thy statutes.
Mine eyes run down with rivers of water, 136
Because they observe not thy law.

צ TZADE.

Righteous art thou, O LORD, 137
And upright are thy judgements.
Thou hast commanded thy testimonies in righteousness 138
And very faithfulness.
My zeal hath consumed me, 139
Because mine adversaries have forgotten thy words.
Thy word is very pure; 140
Therefore thy servant loveth it.
I am small and despised: 141
Yet do not I forget thy precepts.
Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, 142

---

135. 135[a] is the same in substance as the prayer in lxxx. 3, 7, 19; see on lxxx. 3.

136. 136[c] from Lam. iii. 48. Note the concern of the poet that so many should be disobedient to Jehovah!

TSADE.

137–144. *God's ordinances just, pure, and full of support.*

137. are thy judgements: better, 'in thy ordinances.' Wellhausen joins this word with the next verse.

138. Render: 'The statutes (which) thou hast commanded are (full of) righteousness And much faithfulness.' 'Righteousness' has the same meaning as 'faithfulness' in this verse: see on verse 75.

139 is based on lxix. 9.

My zeal: so Heb. and Sym.: but LXX and Aq. have '*thy* zeal' (= zeal for thee), under the influence of lxix. 9.

consumed: Heb. 'undone,' 'destroyed.'

140. pure: tried, tested; having stood the test. Cf. Greek *dokimos*: see xii. 6, xviii. 30.

141. small: not 'young' as LXX, though the Hebrew can mean that: but = 'insignificant' as the word **despised** shows; so Sym., Jero.; cf. Judges vi. 15 ('the least,' same adjective). Devotion to the law more than counterbalances the drawback of belonging to a now unimportant and despised nation.

And thy law is truth.
143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me:
Yet thy commandments are my delight.
144 Thy testimonies are righteous for ever:
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

ק KOPH.

145 I have called with my whole heart; answer me, O LORD:
I will keep thy statutes.
146 I have called unto thee; save me,
And I shall observe thy testimonies.
147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried:
I hoped in thy words.
148 Mine eyes prevented the night watches,

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143. Trouble: anguish: both the words have in them the radical idea of straitness: but the former is usually contrasted with enlargement as a figure for unrestrained joy: see on cvii. 6.

144. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

KOPH.

145-152. *The Psalmist prays earnestly for faithfulness amid persecution.*

145. I have called: better, 'I call': in verse 146 'unto thee' (in Hebrew a mere suffix) is added: rhythm requires its omission in verse 145.

146. And I shall observe: better, 'So that I may,' &c.

testimonies: read, 'precepts': see verse 152.

147. Render: 'I forestall the dawn' (= 'I rise before dawn') 'so that I may cry for help, (while) I wait hopefully for (the fulfilment of) thy word' (= promise).

148. Render: My eyes forestall the night watches,' &c., i. e. I am awake, meditating on thy word before the watchman announces, by trumpet, a new watch; so much is my mind set on thy law.

Before the Exile, and for a considerable time afterwards, the Hebrews had three night watches, as the Greeks. Among the latter, as in Jerusalem (see cxxvii. 1), with the announcement of a new watch a fresh batch of soldiers guarded the city. But the Jerusalem temple was also guarded by successive relays of Levites, and since the Psalmist was probably a Levite, the refer-

That I might meditate in thy word.
Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness : 149
Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy judgements.
They draw nigh that follow after wickedness ; 150
They are far from thy law.
Thou art nigh, O Lord ; 151
And all thy commandments are truth.
Of old have I known from thy testimonies, 152
That thou hast founded them for ever.

---

ence here seems to be to the temple watches. When the Jews came under Roman influence they adopted four watches instead of the Greek three, and it is this Roman custom which prevailed in our Lord's time : see Mark xiii. 35, where all the four watches are named, and Matt. xiv. 25, Mark vi. 48, where the fourth is mentioned. It was the triple watch which obtained when the present Psalm was written, unless we are to give the Psalm a very late date. The first watch cannot be meant in this verse, as that was too early for sleep.

prevented: Old English for 'anticipate.' Perhaps we are to construe this verb here adverbially with the following verb, according to a common Hebrew idiom. The translation would then be, 'I cry for help before the dawn.'

word: read (with Jero., Pesh., Targ.) 'words,' though LXX, Sym., and *keth.* have the plural.

149. Hear: the Hebrew is a strong form of the imperative = 'O do hear.'

Quicken: i. e. 'revive.'

judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

150. Render : 'They draw near that pursue me with malicious cunning,' &c.

that follow after: read (changing the final vowel), 'that follow' (or 'pursue') 'me.'

wickedness: Heb. 'with malicious scheming,' adv. acc. Perhaps we should (with Duhm) alter one vowel in the verb and render 'My persecutors employ' (*lit.* 'bring near') 'wicked scheming.'

151. Thou art nigh: if my persecutors are near (or bring their wicked plots near), thou art also near.

truth: better, 'full of faithfulness' : noun for adjective; see on verse 75.

152. testimonies: better, 'admonitions.'

ר RESH.

153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me;
For I do not forget thy law.
154 Plead thou my cause, and redeem me:
Quicken me according to thy word.
155 Salvation is far from the wicked;
For they seek not thy statutes.
156 Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD:
Quicken me according to thy judgements.
157 Many are my persecutors and mine adversaries;
Yet have I not swerved from thy testimonies.
158 I beheld the treacherous dealers, and was grieved;
Because they observe not thy word.

RESH.

153-160. *In great distress the Psalmist is faithful, and entreats Jehovah's help.*

153. 153^a is based on ix. 13.

154. Jehovah was conceived among the Israelites as a judge taking the part of the wronged against the wrongdoer. The ordinary Hebrew word for 'prayer' means, perhaps, strictly an entreaty to God to intervene on behalf of the oppressed; see Introd. to Ps. lxxxvi (*Title*).

redeem: see on lxxiv. 2 (*ga'al*).

word: better, 'saying,' though here in the sense of promise. Pesh., Jero. read, 'by thy word': see verses 25, 28, 40, 50, 93.

155. Note the connexion assumed between right conduct and well-being, and the converse.

Salvation: not of course in the evangelical sense. The Hebrew word means strictly the state of being at large; see on cvii. 6.

seek: see on verse 2.

156. judgements: better, 'ordinances.'

157. adversaries: *lit.* 'those that hem me in.' The Hebrew noun is etymologically the antithesis of that usually rendered 'deliverer,' *lit.* 'enlarger': see on cvii. 6.

158. Render: 'When I behold those who act treacherously I loathe (them).'

grieved: see on xcv. 10.

word (*imrah*: see verse 154): read, 'commandments.'

Consider how I love thy precepts: 159
Quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.
The sum of thy word is truth; 160
And every one of thy righteous judgements *endureth* for ever.

ש SHIN.

Princes have persecuted me without a cause; 161
But my heart standeth in awe of thy words.
I rejoice at thy word, 162
As one that findeth great spoil.
I hate and abhor falsehood; 163
But thy law do I love.
Seven times a day do I praise thee, 164

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159. Consider: Heb. 'See,' i. e. reflect: so in verse 153[a].

160. sum: i. e. sum and substance. The rendering 'beginning' (so the ancient versions and the older commentators) is inadmissible here and in cxxxix. 17, where the same Hebrew word occurs. It is not merely the 'beginning' of God's revelation that is faithful: it is *all* faithful.

And every one, &c.: render (slightly changing one Hebrew word): 'And all thy righteous ordinances' (plural for singular, see verse 164) 'are ever-enduring.'

SHIN (*or* SIN).

One letter represents *Sin* and *Shin.* The latter is perhaps included in *Samekh,* with which it is more closely allied. In unpointed Hebrew *Sin* and *Shin* are written alike.

161–168. *Those who keep the law have inner peace and comfort even when persecuted.*

161. Princes: probably the King and Court of Syria are meant; or perhaps Israelitish nobles who had adopted the religion of the conqueror and had been appointed judges.

without a cause: without having any good reason for it. The word can mean, and elsewhere often does mean, 'to no purpose': 'they gain nothing by it, for I stand firm in my respect for the law.'

162. word: read (with *keth.*, LXX, Jero., &c.), 'words.'

163. falsehood: i. e. false religion, idolatry.

law: read, 'statutes.'

164. Seven: a round number as in Lev. xxvi. 18, &c.

Because of thy righteous judgements.
165 Great peace have they which love thy law;
And they have none occasion of stumbling.
166 I have hoped for thy salvation, O LORD,
And have done thy commandments.
167 My soul hath observed thy testimonies;
And I love them exceedingly.
168 I have observed thy precepts and thy testimonies;
For all my ways are before thee.

ת TAU.

169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD:

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165. Render (freely): 'Those who love Thy law have abundant happiness, And no one can cause any interruption in their happiness.'

peace: the Hebrew and the cognate Arabic, Syriac, &c., words include all the essential elements of well-being, health, contentment, outward felicity, &c. When the Semite greets you, using this noun, he means much more than *peace* to you, though no English word corresponds to the Semitic. N. T. Greek also renders the Hebrew greeting, 'peace to you[1].' Of course, under some conditions peace may be the one thing necessary for comfort and well-being.

occasion of stumbling: the Hebrew and Greek words mean that which causes one to stumble, and so stops one's progress. The enemy (Syria) may endeavour to trip up the pious Israelite in his course of happy trust, but Jehovah will frustrate this hostile intent. The stumblingblock may—as in 1 John ii. 10—have here a subjective meaning. The sense would then be: 'Those who love thy law have much happiness, and no fears (or distracting thoughts) can disturb their inner joy.' But the Hebrew and Greek words denote usually something which causes *others* to fall.

166. 166^a is a reminiscence of Gen. xlix. 18.

done: LXX 'loved,' as in verse 163.

167. 167^a, see 129^b.

And I love: LXX, Jero. 'I loved.'

TAU.

169-176. *Sundry petitions; as for revival, favour, guidance, &c.*

169. Render: 'My ringing cry (of anguish) comes near before

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[1] See Luke xxiv. 36.

Give me understanding according to thy word.
Let my supplication come before thee : 170
Deliver me according to thy word.
Let my lips utter praise ; 171
For thou teachest me thy statutes.
Let my tongue sing of thy word ; 172
For all thy commandments are righteousness.
Let thine hand be ready to help me ; 173
For I have chosen thy precepts.
I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD ; 174
And thy law is my delight.
Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee ; 175
And let thy judgements help me.
I have gone astray like a lost sheep ; seek thy servant ; 176
For I do not forget thy commandments.

A Song of Ascents. **120**

In my distress I cried unto the LORD, 1

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thee, O Jehovah : Revive' (so Pesh., Baethgen, Cheyne (2)) 'me according to thy word.'

170. supplication : Heb. 'prayer for favour.'

171. utter : Heb. 'pour' or 'belch forth' (as a fountain) ; so xciv. 1. The verb is stronger than 'utter.'

172. word (*imrah*) : read 'faithfulness'; 'word' occurs in verses 169 f.

commandments : read, 'admonitions.'

173. thine hand = 'thy power.'

174. The same thought in verse 20.

I have longed : better, 'I long' ; same verb in verse 4.

175. and it shall praise, &c. : better (as the Heb.), 'so that it may praise,' &c.

judgements : better, 'ordinances.'

176. Render : 'I am going astray as a lost sheep,' &c. According to the Hebrew accents we must translate : 'I am going astray : as a lost sheep, O seek thy servant' : so J. H. Michaelis, Hupfeld, Delitzsch ; but the rhythm opposes this.

The 'Pilgrim Psalms.' (cxx–cxxxiv.)

Pss. cxx to cxxxiv stand by themselves as a group apart. They have all of them common metrical, or at least poetical, features, and hey are all brief, bright, and beautiful. Each of them has for

And he answered me.

2 Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips,

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title 'A Song of the goings up,' or rather 'Songs of the going up,' the plural of the second word referring to the whole expression according to a common Hebrew idiom : cf. the English 'Song-of-the-going-ups.' The slight variation in the title of Ps. cxxi is probably due to a copyist's error. It is now generally held that these fifteen Psalms were sung by the pilgrim bands who came up to Jerusalem in order to attend the three annual feasts. The title makes it likely that a special hymn-book existed containing 'Pilgrim Psalms.' The Psalms in the group had in many if not all cases an origin quite distinct from the use to which they were thus put. For other opinions see the larger commentaries.

Psalm CXX.

Theme. Prayer to be delivered from the tongue of slander.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for deliverance (verses 1 f.).

(2) Punishment of the slanderer (verses 3 f.).

(3) The sorrows of exile (verses 5–7).

Psalms of the 'goings up' are appropriately prefaced by one which depicts the hard lot of the scattered Jews (see verses 5–7). The sadness of this Psalm soon gives way to the gladness of the Psalms which follow, a gladness stirred up by the thoughts which the festivals recalled. Jehovah had been good to the nation in the long ago : he would not now forget to be gracious.

But though it is likely that this conception of the Psalm caused it to be placed at the head of the 'Pilgrim Psalms,' it does not represent the purpose of the writer, which was, apparently, to pray for protection against those of his own fellow countrymen who had made common cause with the Samaritan party, or, it may be, with the Syrians.

The Psalm has much in common with number 12 of 'The Psalms of Solomon,' the latter being probably uttered by a zealous Pharisee against an unbelieving Sadducee.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Nothing definite can be said on this point : but the Psalm might well have sprung out of the Samaritan persecutions of Nehemiah's day.

1 f. *Prayer to be delivered from treacherous foes.*

1. distress : *lit.* 'straitness' : see on cvii. 6.

cried : better, 'called.'

2. See lii. 1–4.

'Men say, "I have given so often that I can give no more." God says, "I have given, therefore I will give"' (McLaren). God's having answered (verse 1) gives the ground for the prayer of this verse.

And from a deceitful tongue.
What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done 3
more unto thee,
Thou deceitful tongue?
Sharp arrows of the mighty, 4
With coals of juniper.
Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, 5
That I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
My soul hath long had her dwelling 6

---

lips: so the LXX, Pesh., Targ.: but the M. T. and Jero. have the singular 'lip.'

deceitful tongue: Heb., 'tongue (which is) deceit,' i.e. which is full of deceit: see on cix. 4 and on cxix. 75.

3 f. *The punishment of slanderers.*

3. Render: 'What shall He (Jehovah) give thee, and what more shall He (give) thee, O thou deceitful tongue?' The verb has no expressed subject, though 'Jehovah' occurs in the previous verse and is probably understood. If the subject is 'undefined' the passive will correctly express it ('What shall one give' = 'What shall be given'). Even then Jehovah will be the implied subject.

4. The punishment is expressed in terms describing his own crime. This verse supplies the answer to the question in verse 3. The sharpened arrows of a warrior will pierce that tongue which shot forth the arrows of slander. Moreover, those people who destroyed, as if by fire, many an innocent life will be themselves burnt up in the fiercest fire.

juniper: better, 'broom,' the root of which is still used in Palestine for the manufacture of charcoal; the latter makes the hottest and the longest enduring fire, and is the ordinary fuel among Arabs.

5–7. *The writer's sad lot in having to dwell among a cruel and barbarous people.* Originally the proper names were used typically to denote the character of the writer's treacherous fellow countrymen. But to the Jews of the Diaspora they stood for the rough and ruthless people whose lands they inhabited. The word **tents** does not of necessity imply Beduin life: see on cxviii. 15 and cxxxii. 3.

5. Meshech (*extension*): the name of a people living between the Black and Caspian Seas (Gen. x. 2).

Kedar (*black*): one of the sons of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 13): then an Arabian tribe. In later Hebrew it denotes, as here, Beduin Arabs generally.

With him that hateth peace.
7 I am *for* peace:
But when I speak, they are for war.

121 A Song of Ascents.

1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?
2 My help *cometh* from the LORD,

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6. peace: see on cxix. 165.

7. I am *for* peace: *lit.* 'I am peace,' i.e. I seek to promote peace: see on cix. 4 and on cxix. 75; and for the word 'peace' see on cxix. 165.

But when I speak: the word rendered **peace** must be supplied: see xxviii. 3. 'To speak *Shalom*' (peace) means to utter the usual friendly greeting. They return war for his good wishes.

PSALM CXXI.

Theme. Jehovah, Israel's guardian.

I. *Title.* 'A song belonging to the goings up' (= 'the ascents'): probably an editorial variation due to a desire to make the usual title of these Pilgrim Psalms more suitable. We must read 'Songs of the ascents.'

II. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist's confidence in Jehovah who helps him (verses 1 f.).

(2) Jehovah is the keeper of Israel (verses 3-5).

(3) He preserves under all circumstances (verses 6-8).

Verses 1 f. are uttered in the first person: the rest of the Psalm in the second. Perhaps the Psalm was sung antiphonally.

III. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm enabling us to decide when and why it was originally composed.

1 f. *Jehovah the Helper.*

1. unto the mountains: i.e. towards Jerusalem, which stands on mountains, and is (almost wholly) surrounded by them. The temple mountain is particularly in the writer's thoughts. Daniel prayed towards Jerusalem (Dan. vi. 11) as the Jews still do, and as the Moslem does towards Mekka, and the Zoroastrian (Parsee) towards the rising sun (the East). The priests of Mithras always prayed with their faces to the sun. The Orientation of Christian churches is connected with the last two, and has no Jewish, Christian, or Mahommedan origin; see on cxxiii. 1.

2. from the LORD: not from the **mountains.**

Which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: 3
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel 4
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD is thy keeper: 5
The LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day, 6
Nor the moon by night.
The LORD shall keep thee from all evil; 7
He shall keep thy soul.
The LORD shall keep thy going out and thy coming in, 8
From this time forth and for evermore.

Which made, &c.: and so unlike heathen deities.

3–5. *Jehovah the keeper of Israel.*

3. He will not suffer, &c.: it is the subjective negative (*'al*, cf. Greek *mē*) that is used here: when, as here, it goes with the indicative it brings with it an emotional element: 'He will not, nay, in harmony with His nature cannot, suffer,' &c. The sense shows it is not to be construed as imperative or optative, though the Hebrew permits this.

4. Behold: hardly to be translated; like *inna* in Arabic it serves to introduce a statement.

5. thy shade upon thy right hand: in Hebrew 'right hand' = south, as the left hand = north, the direction of these quarters looking eastward. (Is this a survival of sun-worship?) The sense is, 'Jehovah is thy shade on that side of thee which is exposed to the sun when he is at his zenith, when his heat is fiercest'; cf. 'by day' in verse 6. But see on cxlii. 4.

6–8. *Jehovah preserves Israel always.*

6. He will protect against both sunstroke and moonstroke. The former is referred to in 2 Kings iv. 19 and Isa. xlix. 10, and is common in the East. In folklore moonstroke plays a large part, cf. 'lunacy,' 'lunatic.' In Welsh *lloerig* corresponds exactly to 'lunatic.'

8. going out: i. e. for the purpose of labour, business, &c.

coming in: referring to the life in the home; see 2 Sam. ii. 25, &c.

Going out and **coming in** embrace the whole of a man's life (see Deut. xxviii. 6, xxxi. 2, &c.), and that whole is guarded by

122 A Song of Ascents; of David.

1 I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of the Lord.
2 Our feet are standing
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem;
3 Jerusalem, that art builded
As a city that is compact together:

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our loving Father in heaven from this moment until death—the Psalmist has no life beyond death in mind; see on cxix. 44.

Psalm CXXII.

Theme. A pilgrim's meditations during the festival.

I. *Contents.* (1) The Psalmist's joy when invited to go up to the feast (verse 1).

(2) The joy felt in being at Jerusalem, and some reflections awakened (verses 2–5).

(3) Prayer and request for prayer on behalf of Jerusalem (verses 6–9).

The language of the Psalm is so fresh and vivid that it can best be explained if the writer is supposed to be in Jerusalem attending the feast.

II. *Authorship and Date.* A date much later than the Exile is suggested by the numerous Aramaisms, and by the writer's attitude towards centralization of worship at Jerusalem (that o the Priestly Code). It is the scattered Jews alone who make the pilgrimage: there is no reference to the northern kingdom.

1. *Joy at being invited to go up.*

1. when they said: Heb. and LXX, 'at those who said' but the omission of a small letter (*yod*) and a change of vowels yield the rendering of the E.VV.

Let us go, &c.: Heb., LXX, Jero. 'We will go.'

2–5. *At Jerusalem: joyful thoughts.*

2. are standing: the 'perf. of experience,' 'have been and are still standing': a common Hebrew usage.

Within thy gates, O Jerusalem: so Heb., Pesh., Targ., Jero But LXX reads 'within the gates of Jerusalem,' and for metrica reasons Bickell, Baethgen, Duhm, and Cheyne (2) adopt this: bu the next verse seems to require the vocative, and it is doubtful i the metre would be helped by the proposed change.

3. As a city that is compact together: better, 'To be a city united closely together': the preposition translated 'as' (a city) is what is called the *kaph veritatis*, and it denotes what a thing *is* not what it is *like.* Jerusalem within the walls has narrow street joined closely together.

Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD, 4
For a testimony unto Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of the LORD.
For there are set thrones for judgement, 5
The thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 6
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls, 7
And prosperity within thy palaces.
For my brethren and companions' sakes, 8
I will now say, Peace be within thee.

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4 f. Note the rhetorical repetition of words ('anadiplosis') in these verses, a common feature in the 'Pilgrim' and 'Royal Psalms.' So in cxxxv. 12.

4. go up: better, 'went up': referring to the olden time.

tribes: at no time did the twelve (or ten?) tribes as such make pilgrimages to Jerusalem. But the poet glances backward to the time long past when his forefathers, spoken of as tribes, visited Jerusalem just as he does, and for the same purpose.

the LORD: Heb. 'Jah' (Yah); see on lxxxix. 8 and civ. 35.

***For* a testimony,** &c.: render, 'It is a law for Israel there (= at Jerusalem) to praise Jehovah': the word 'testimony' = 'law,' as in xix. 7. For **name** (*Shēm*) read *there* (*Shām*), and place the 'unto' before 'Jehovah': then render as above.

5. there: i. e. at Jerusalem.

are set thrones: better, 'were placed thrones': in the far back times kings ruled on their thrones: these thrones were sat on by kings belonging to the Davidic dynasty.

for judgement: i. e. for all the functions of royalty. Cf. the judges who preceded the kings. The poet is recalling the past, and not, as Wellhausen and others hold, depicting the present.

6-9. *Prayer and request for prayer on behalf of Jerusalem.* In these verses there are word-plays which no translation can reproduce: the first four words in verse 6 are these: *Sha'ălu Shĕlōm Yĕrūshālēm yishlāyū.*

6. They shall prosper, &c.: render, 'May thy tents' (= 'thy dwellings') 'be secure.'

For **They . . . that love thee** read, with Ewald, Duhm, 'Thy tents,' after Job xii. 6.

8. I will now say, &c.: render, 'Let me now' (= 'I pray thee') 'say, Peace be to thee.'

9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God
I will seek thy good.

123 A Song of Ascents.

1 Unto thee do I lift up mine eyes,
O thou that sittest in the heavens.
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their master,
As the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;
So our eyes *look* unto the LORD our God,
Until he have mercy upon us.
3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us:

PSALM CXXIII.

Theme. The soul looking away from its distress to its Master and God.

I. *Contents.* (1) The eyes turned in faith to Jehovah (verses 1 f.). (2) Prayer for help in distress (verses 3 f.).

There is more rhyme in this Psalm than in any other commensurate part of the O. T., though in a translation this feature is necessarily lost. Rhyme is exceedingly rare in Biblical poetry, but it abounds in the poetry of the Arabs, none of the latter older than say A. D. 500.

II. *Authorship and Date.* It is impossible to say what is the specific distress which constitutes the background of this Psalm; see verses 3 f. It might have been that experienced in Babylon, or it might have been that due to the Samaritan, or even the Syrian persecutions.

1 f. The upturned eyes: why do Jews, Moslems, and Christians look up when they pray, as if God were in that direction more than in any other? To the Australian, our *up* is his *down.* It may be, as Gunkel suggests, a survival of astral religion.

2. Behold: see on cxxi. 4.

servants: Heb. 'men servants': of these there seem to have been several in a Jewish house of the ordinary kind.

These servants depend on what the master hands them: so they look to his hand, just as a domestic animal will follow the hand of one who feeds it. The connexion shows that it is the hand as *giving* and not as *commanding* which is here meant.

3 f. *Prayer in trouble.*

3. Have mercy, &c.: Heb. 'be gracious to us.'

For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
Our soul is exceedingly filled 4
With the scorning of those that are at ease,
And with the contempt of the proud.

A Song of Ascents; of David. **124**

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, 1
Let Israel now say;
If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, 2
When men rose up against us:
Then they had swallowed us up alive, 3
When their wrath was kindled against us:
Then the waters had overwhelmed us, 4

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4. proud: so the *keth.* and the ancient versions. But the Massorites (*qr.*) make two words, the English of which is 'proud oppressors': hardly (as Kirkpatrick) 'proudest oppressors,' though the Hebrew (*qr.*) allows both renderings.

PSALM CXXIV.

Theme. Praise for a recent deliverance.

I. *Contents.* (1) We should have been undone had not Jehovah helped us (verses 1–5).

(2) Praise to Jehovah for His goodness in delivering His people (verses 6–8).

Cf. with this Psalm Jonah's song of thanksgiving (Jonah ii. 3–10).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm celebrates the escape of the nation from some plot laid for them, but it is impossible to decide what that was, or to what period it belongs. The deliverance from Babylon does not suit the Psalm, as it is some sudden turn of events that is clearly implied.

Note the repetition of certain catch phrases in succeeding lines of this Psalm ('anadiplosis'), and see on xciii. 4, xcvi. 13, cxxii. 4 f., and cxxxv. 12.

1–5. *Jehovah's deliverance.*

In verses 1 f. we have a double protasis, one in each verse. Compare with these two verses the structure of cxxix. 1 f. In verses 3–5 we have a triple apodosis—a threefold statement of what would have happened without Jehovah's help.

3. swallowed, &c.: as wild beasts devour their prey; see Jer. li. 34. The enemy is described under the same figure in verse 6.

4. The devastating effects of the wild mountain torrents of Palestine, and especially the loss of life and property caused by

The stream had gone over our soul:
5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
6 Blessed be the Lord,
Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

125 A Song of Ascents.

1 They that trust in the Lord

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the rushing overflowing Jordan, have often supplied Psalmists with a figure of ruin due to foreign and native oppressors. See for the same metaphor xviii. 16, lxix. 1, 2, 15; Isa. viii. 7 f.; Lam. iii. 54. Probably in all such passages there is an implied reference to the primaeval ocean of the creation-myth: see on lxxiv. 11.

stream: a mountain torrent: these are in Palestine suddenly swollen after a storm.

our soul = us; see on cvii. 18.

5. proud: better, 'surging,' or 'swelling.'

our soul = us; see on cvii. 18.

6–8. *Praise for deliverance.*

6. See on verse 3.

Blessed: i. e. 'praised': see on lxxxiv. 5.

7. The thought in this verse is: 'We were ensnared as a bird: but we escaped as an ensnared bird sometimes does.' See Lam. iii. 52.

snare: a kind of trap-net used for catching birds.

and we: the pronoun is emphatic in Hebrew: 'and we—we are escaped.'

8. Both parts of the verse occur frequently in the Psalter: see also for 8^b, Jonah ii. 9. **The name of the LORD** = Jehovah Himself: see on lxxix. 9 and on lxxxiii. 16.

Psalm CXXV.

Theme. The security of God's people.

I. *Contents.* (1) Safety of all who trust in Jehovah (verses 1–3). (2) Prayer on behalf of the righteous (verses 4 f.).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm does not date itself, and it is useless speculating as to when it was written. This Psalm, and others like it (Pss. cxxiii f., &c.), might have been composed for use in worship, with no reference to any historical situation.

Are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth
for ever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, 2
So the LORD is round about his people,
From this time forth and for evermore.
For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot 3
of the righteous;
That the righteous put not forth their hands unto iniquity.
Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, 4

The experience they imply was, and is still, to a large extent general.

1–3. *The security of those who put their trust in God.*

1. Believers are compared to **mount Zion,** which has its roots deep down in the earth, and cannot be moved. A visitor to his mountain home, after decades of absence, will, amid countless changes in other things, find the lie of the land, its mountains, valleys, and rivers, unchanged.

2. As the believer is compared to Mount Zion, so Jehovah is likened to those mountains which encompass Jerusalem, and which, in times of war, proved its best defence. On every side, except on the north-west (Jaffa Gate), the sacred city is mountain-bound; so he that trusts in Jehovah is encompassed on all sides; see Zech. ii. 5.

3. Render: 'Surely He will not let the sceptre of the wicked man rest upon the land allotted to the righteous,' &c.

For: the word means also 'Surely,' a sense far more suitable here. This verse applies the principle of security expressed in 1 f. to the actual state of the nation.

sceptre of wickedness: better (with LXX, Pesh., A.V.), 'the sceptre of the wicked,' changing the Hebrew vowels only. But the Hebrew gives good sense, and is supported by Targ., Jero. The allusion is evidently to foreign dominion, either Persian or Syrian. Jehovah will be sure to set free His people, if they look to Him.

shall not rest: read as above, 'will not let . . . rest': so LXX, Eth.; see Isa. xxx. 32.

That the righteous, &c.: continued oppression might lead even the righteous to give way to sin, to doubt, or to disbelieve in the reign of righteousness. Duhm joins this clause with the following verse: **That the righteous . . .,** (4) **Do good,** &c.

4 f. *Prayer for the righteous.*

4. Do good: in Hebrew one word meaning 'show kindness,

And to them that are upright in their hearts.
5 But as for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways,
The LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.
Peace be upon Israel.

126 A Song of Ascents.
1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion,

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favour to.' The verb has no ethical meaning, though, as in English, the adjective ('good') commonly has.

5. such as turn aside unto their crooked ways: Heb. 'Who turn (bend) aside their crooked (ways),' i. e. who turn their ways of life aside from what is right, making them crooked. The Hebrew word (*yashar*) generally translated 'upright' means strictly 'straight.'

The LORD shall lead: better, 'May Jehovah lead,' &c.; cf. Matt. xxv. 41.

PSALM CXXVI.

Theme. Past joy and present sorrow.

I. *Contents.* (1) The joy felt when, at a former time, prosperity returned (verses 1-3).

(2) Prayer and hope for a renewal of that prosperity (verses 4-6). The Psalm assumes that at some not distant period in the past Jehovah turned the tide of the nation's affairs, making the people once more happy and prosperous. But there is another change, this time for the worse, and in the present Psalm we seem to have petition and hope that Jehovah may again bless and prosper the nation. Smend, Duhm, and Gunkel (following the Pesh., Targ., Ar.) regard the tenses of the verbs in verses 1-3 as all referring to the future, the perfects being 'perfects of certainty.' But this is a very unnatural way of treating the Psalm. The LXX, Eth., Calvin, and most moderns construe as preterites.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Many have supposed that verses 1-3 refer to the gladness which accompanied the return from Babylon, and that the distress spoken of in verses 4-6 is that endured during the Samaritan persecutions. But there is little evidence from which we can argue with confidence.

1. Render: 'When Jehovah restored the fortunes of Zion,' &c.

turned again the captivity: the word 'captivity' can denote 'captives,' abstract for concrete. But since Ewald's day most scholars consider the Hebrew word rendered 'captivity' to be an abstract noun from the verb 'to turn,' the phrase meaning *lit.* 'to turn the turning,' i. e. make a change in things, then

We were like unto them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter, 2
And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
The Lord hath done great things for them.
The Lord hath done great things for us; 3
Whereof we are glad.
Turn again our captivity, O Lord, 4
As the streams in the South.
They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 5

'to restore the fortunes.' In Job xlii. 10 the phrase can have no other meaning, and it was that passage which first set Ewald a-thinking on the matter.

dream, &c.: 'we could hardly think the fact of our deliverance real, so delighted were we: we thought we must be dreaming'; see Isa. xxix. 7^b; Luke xxiv. 41; Acts xii. 9. Sudden joy and sudden sorrow have often this stupefying effect.

2. When the consciousness of reality dawned, they laughed and sang, &c.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter: see Job viii. 21.

Then said, &c.: better, 'Then was it said among the heathen.' The verb has no definite subject.

The LORD hath done, &c.: see Joel ii. 20 f.

3. The LORD hath done, &c.: the community takes up the words of the heathen.

4-6. *Prayer and hope for a return of joy.*

4. Render: 'Turn, thou, O Jehovah, our fortunes, As brooks in the south land' (the *Negeb*) are turned.

streams in the South: the Hebrew word *Negeb* translated 'south' is a technical name for the arid region in the south of Judah (Judges i. 15, &c.). In the winter these parts were, in a measure, irrigated by streams which dried up when the summer came. Then after months and months of drought again came the life-giving streams, making the people laugh and sing. So, says the Psalmist, 'Let our winter streams come to us: it is our summer now, and a long and dry one too: bring us back the joy that has fled, as thou restorest to the south land its winter brooks.'

5. Those who sow in tears begotten of labour and anxiety, have joy when the reaping comes. Israel has toiled and wept enough: surely the time of joyous reaping has arrived.

shall reap: better, 'reap': a general principle is stated.

6 Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing forth the seed;
He shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves *with him.*

127 A Song of Ascents; of Solomon.

1 Except the LORD build the house,
They labour in vain that build it:
Except the LORD keep the city,

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6. Render: 'He that bears (= brings) the trail of seed will go on his way weeping: (but) He shall assuredly come home with ringing shouts of joy, bearing his sheaves.'

bearing forth the seed: Heb. 'bearing the trail or draught of seed.' The Hebrew word rendered above 'trail' means 'what is hauled or drawn out of the sea,' as 'a haul of fish,' or, as in Job xxviii. 18, a 'haul of pearl oysters.' Here it stands for as much seed as one brings to sow.

PSALM CXXVII.

This Psalm, small as it is, is made up of two smaller ones, having no special connexion with each other. This is conceded by nearly all modern scholars.

Psalm cxxvii (1) (verses 1 f.).

Theme. Success impossible without Jehovah's protection.

I. *Title.* This Psalm and Ps. lxxii are the only ones connected in the title with the name Solomon. Perhaps there was a Solomon hymn-book, though in that case the hymns have been all lost, except the two named: cf., however, the nineteen 'Psalms of Solomon.' In the LXX of the present Psalm Solomon's name does not appear.

II. *Contents:* see *Theme.*

III. *Authorship and Date.* There is nothing in the Psalm on which to base an opinion regarding these points.

1 f. *Human effort vain without Divine help.*

1. Render:

'Unless Jehovah build a house,
(The) builders labour upon it to no purpose:
Unless Jehovah keep (the) city,
(The) keeper (of it) is awake (in the night) to no purpose.'

They . . . that build: better, '(the) builders': so LXX, Wellhausen, Baethgen, &c.

labour: read, 'labour upon it': so the authorities just named and the usage of the language; see Jonah iv. 10; Eccles. ii. 21. The verb for 'labour' means 'to work oneself weary': even that avails not if God does not build with us, i. e. bless us.

The watchman waketh but in vain.
It is vain for you that ye rise up early, and so late take rest, 2
And eat the bread of toil:
For so he giveth unto his beloved sleep.
Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: 3

The watchman: *lit.* 'the keeper'; so cxxi. 4: the *keeper* cannot *keep* unless Jehovah *keeps* also.

waketh: i. e. 'wakes to watch': 'to act the part of keeper.' On the 'night watches' see on cxix. 148.

Verse 1 is inscribed on the front of the town hall at Ripon.

2. Render: 'It is vain for you that ye rise up early and that ye sit down late (at night) To eat the food earned by painful toil: He gives His beloved what is necessary (even) in (their) sleep.'

so late take rest: the principal verb here never means 'to take rest,' 'to lie down to rest,' though Hupfeld held that it does: *Shakab* is the Hebrew word for that. Nor does the compound expression = 'to sit up late,' but 'to sit late at table for the purpose of eating': they take their evening meal late because they kept on toiling so long. The expression 'sitting to eat,' &c. occurs in 1 Sam. xxvi. 24, and it belongs to the time when the Jews sat at meals; the Greek custom of reclining at meals was adopted by the Jews at a later time.

so he giveth, &c.: the word translated 'so' is here a noun = 'what is just,' 'proper,' 'sufficient': 'He gives what is suitable, sufficient.'

sleep: accusative of time: though Hebrew has virtually lost case endings it retains the functions of case, 'in sleep' = 'during sleep.' The idea is: Jehovah gives the needful to those whom He loves even if they cannot move a hand to toil—as it were when they are asleep. The lesson is simply, 'Be not anxious; He provides': there is no encouragement here for idleness or carelessness; we are to labour, but to trust as if all depended on God: see Matt. vi. 25-34; Prov. x. 22, &c.

Mrs. Browning's well-known poem is based on a wrong ranslation of the Psalm, but what that poem says is as true as ver.

Perhaps the Hebrew for sleep (*Shena*) is the corrupted form of *Selah*: its presence adds a strange thought, its form is irregular Aramaic for Hebrew), and its omission (making the verse end vith 'necessary' in the above proposed rendering) simplifies the erse.

Psalm cxxvii (2) (verses 3-5).

Theme. Children the joy and defence of their father.

And the fruit of the womb is *his* reward.
4 As arrows in the hand of a mighty man,
So are the children of youth.
5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:
They shall not be ashamed,
When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

128 A Song of Ascents.

1 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD,

I. *Contents:* see *Theme.*

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm is of so general a characte that hardly anything can be inferred from it as to when and unde what circumstances it was composed.

3. children: the same Hebrew word is used for 'sons' anc for 'children.' Parallelism (**fruit of the womb**) and the drift o the Psalm show that 'children' is what is here intended.

heritage: men receive children from Jehovah as they inheri property from their earthly fathers.

reward: the figure changes: children are also a reward payment for uprightness of life.

4. children of youth: i. e. children born when the father i young: see Gen. xxxvii. 3, xlix. 3. Such children (sons especially are able to protect their father when he is old (see verse 5).

5. that hath his quiver full of them = 'that has many children. The figure 'arrows' of verse 4 is continued.

They shall not, &c.: **When they,** &c.: read, 'he' for 'they in both cases, as LXX, Duhm; it is the 'father' who is spoke of, not the 'sons': he shall not be ashamed, i. e. be foiled in hi purpose, when he speaks with his opponents at law.

in the gate: in the space before the gate of Eastern citie justice was dispensed and civic business transacted: see lxix. 12 Deut. xxi. 19.

To speak with enemies = to have a lawsuit: see Joshua xx. 4.

PSALM CXXVIII.

Theme. The god-fearing man is blessed in his work and in hi family.

I. *Contents.* (1) The prosperity of him who fears Jehova (verses 1–3).

(2) He will have Jehovah's benediction and see the prosperit of Jerusalem and of his own family (verses 4–6).

That walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: 2
Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts 3
of thine house:
Thy children like olive plants, round about thy table.
Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed 4

II. *Authorship and Date.* The remarks made on Ps. cxxvii in this connexion apply here.

1–3. *He who fears Jehovah has prosperity in his daily occupation and in his home.*

1. Blessed: i. e. happy, fortunate, referring not to the character nor even to the feelings, but to the outward life; his lot is a privileged one, having wealth and children: see lxxxiv. 4.

2. Here the second person is introduced, but in a kind of impersonal way.

This verse is quoted in *Pirqe Aboth*, iv. 3 (Taylor).

labour: the fruit of the labour. To **eat** means 'to enjoy,' have the benefit of.

3. fruitful vine: the *tertium quid* is fruitfulness, not gracefulness or dependence.

in the innermost parts of thine house: the woman's appartment in the tent or the house was farthest away from the main entrance. When the family was poor and could afford but a one-roomed house a portion was separated by a curtain for the wife's use. The harem and the compulsory veil are institutions of Islam[1].

olive plants: emblems of freshness and vigour: see lii. 8; Jer. xi. 16, &c.

table: the tables used at present in Palestine in both tents and houses are small round ones standing about a foot high above the ground. During a meal the participants sit on the ground around the table, leaning on one side. In Bible times the table was probably of the same character: see Gen. xviii. 1 f.; Judges vi. 19.

In the picture of the home the mother does not seem to have her place with the children at the table: nor indeed the father. But it is not denied in the Psalm that both the parents sat with the children. In this ideal home monogamy is the practice assumed.

4–6. *This god-fearing man will have Jehovah's benediction.*

4. blessed: a different word from that so translated in verse 1;

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[1] See Hastings' *D. B.*, 'Veil' (by the present writer).

That feareth the LORD.
5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion :
And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days o
thy life.
6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children.
Peace be upon Israel.

129 A Song of Ascents.

1 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up,

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there it = 'happy' : here the English word has its literal sens 'bless-ed' of Jehovah. But those whom Jehovah **blesses** ar 'happy' : see on cxviii. 26.

5 f. Render : 'May Jehovah bless thee from Zion (where H dwells) So that thou mayest enjoy gazing upon the prosperity c Jerusalem all the days of thy life, And so that thou mayest see th children's children,' &c.

5. And thou shalt see : in Hebrew the imperative is used, bu in accordance with Hebrew usage after another imperative expresses purpose : cf. 'Do this and live' = 'Do this that tho mayest live.' 'See' is followed by the preposition *b* = 'on' c 'upon': in Hebrew 'to see' or 'look on' = 'to feast one's eye on,' 'to gaze on with delight' : see on cxii. 8. In verse 5 the ver 'see' takes the accusative direct, and therefore retains its stri meaning.

PSALM CXXIX.

Theme. Israel, protected by Jehovah in the past, imprecat vengeance upon her oppressors.

I. *Contents.* (1) Israel oppressed and tortured in the past, bu delivered by God (verses 1–4).

(2) Imprecations on the nation's foes (verses 5–8).

This Psalm and Ps. cxxiv have much in common, alike in for and in matter. In both there are two strophes, the first celebra ing God's protection of Israel in the past. The second line i both is identical, 'Let Israel now say' : and in both the first lir is repeated.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See what is said of Ps. cxxiv this connexion.

The deliverance from Babylon is usually thought to have give rise to both Psalms.

1–4. *Israel oppressed, but delivered.*

1. Many a time : one word in Hebrew, meaning here probab 'much' or 'greatly.' In cxxiii. 4 it is translated 'exceedingl

Let Israel now say;
Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up: 2
Yet they have not prevailed against me.
The plowers plowed upon my back; 3
They made long their furrows.
The LORD is righteous: 4
He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

(filled), in lxv. 10 'abundantly,' but in cxx. 6 'long' (=for a long time). 'Much have they afflicted me,' &c.

my youth up: Israel's bondage period in Egypt is often spoken of as 'her youth'; see Hos. xi. 1; Jer. ii. 2, &c.

Let Israel, &c.: see cxxiv. 1.

2. Render: 'They have afflicted me much from my youth up: Yea, they have prevailed against me.'

Many a time, &c.: repeated from verse 1: cf. cxxiv. 1 f.

Yet they have, &c.: the Hebrew word rendered **Yet** never has that meaning: it is often climactic in sense, meaning 'yea,' 'moreover.' The negative (*lo*) in this verse is simply a dittograph of *li* (=against me) at the end of the verse: it was first reduplicated by mistake, and then spelt differently to give it sense. With the change thus introduced the first part of the Psalm is consistent.

3. Our oppressors have so lashed us with their whips that our backs are marked like ploughed fields. The courbache, or whip, is in constant use in Egypt and Palestine at the present time. The nation speaks here, as often, in the first person: see p. 20 ff. For the same metaphor see Isa. li. 23 and cf. Mic. iii. 12; Isa. li. 6.

They made long their furrows: in Arabic the word cognate to the Hebrew for 'furrow' means 'a strip of land ploughed in one journey,' then 'a single furrow the length of the ploughed field.' So at least says Delitzsch, depending on Wetstein: but the Arabic Lexicons of Freytag, Lane, Dozy, and (Arabic only) Khowri do not give that meaning. The general sense is, however, clear: 'They make long furrows.'

4. The figure is changed. In verse 3 Israel is a ploughed field. Here the nation is compared to an ox controlled by its master's yoke. The reference seems to be to the bondage of Egypt, in which the Israelites were like yoked oxen.

cords of the wicked: the word translated 'cords' occurs in ii. 3 for the 'bands of captivity,' but in Job xxxix. 10 for the rope or yoke which binds the ox to the plough. Jehovah snapped these cords, and the nation became a nation of freedmen.

5 Let them be ashamed and turned backward,
All they that hate Zion.
6 Let them be as the grass upon the housetops,
Which withereth afore it groweth up:
7 Wherewith the reaper filleth not his hand,
Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.
8 Neither do they which go by say,
The blessing of the LORD be upon you;
We bless you in the name of the LORD.

5-8. *Imprecations on the foes of Israel.* On such prayers for evil see Introd. to Ps. cix.

5. Let them be, &c.: that we have in this and the following verses real prayers for the undoing of Israel's foes, and not merely expressions of faith in the future, would hardly have been doubted by any except for apologetic reasons.

ashamed: i.e. disappointed, foiled in their ends; see the next word, **turned backward.**

Zion: here the nation; see Additional Note, p. 368.

6. as the grass, &c.: the reference is to the seed blown by the spring winds on to the flat parapeted roofs of Eastern houses. Such grass seed finds refuge, especially in corners and crevices, and begins to grow; but it is burnt by the scorching sun before it flowers, so that no reaper is needed to cut it down and gather it in; see the next verse. The same figure occurs in Isa. xxxvii. 27.

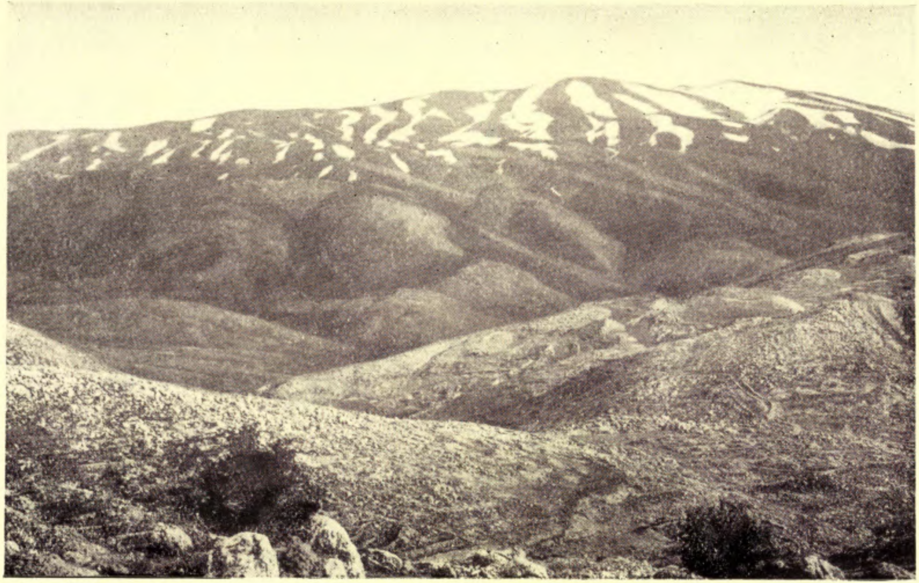
afore it groweth up: *lit.* 'before it unsheaths itself,' then 'before it puts forth its flower.' Another rendering is allowed by the Hebrew: 'before one plucks it up' = 'before it is plucked up.' So LXX, and therefore, of course, the Vulg. (which in the Psalms follows it).

7. The representations on the Egyptian monuments show that the reaper used to hold his scythe with the right hand, laying hold with his left hand of what was cut, removing it out of the way. Behind him followed a man with a large girdled garment, which, above the girdle, had open folds, into which the grain or corn was placed: at intervals the latter was taken to be tied up into sheaves.

8. When any one passed reapers it seems to have been the custom to wish them God's blessing; see Ruth ii. 4.

We bless, &c.: the response of the reapers.

In the case of the field on the roof there would be no reapers to greet or to be greeted.



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MOUNT HERMON

130

A Song of Ascents.

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. 1
Lord, hear my voice: 2
Let thine ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.
If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, 3
O Lord, who shall stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee, 4
That thou mayest be feared.

PSALM CXXX.

Theme. Out of the depths the Psalmist prays for pardon and restoration.

I. *Contents.* (1) The cry of distress (verses 1–4).

(2) The expectation of forgiveness and deliverance (verses 5–8).

This is one of the so-called 'Penitential Psalms.' See on Ps. cii (*Contents*).

II. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm might well be a reflex of the distress felt during the opposition of the Samaritan party in the days of Nehemiah, but that is all that can be said as to the date of its composition.

1–4. *The cry of distress.*

1. Out of the depths: i. e. depths of water; see lxix. 2 f., 14; Isa. li. 10. Hebrew poets often compared a condition of distress to being overwhelmed with boisterous waves; see on cxxiv. 3.

have I cried: better, 'do I call': 'perfect of experience.'

2. attentive: the Hebrew word is found only here and in 2 Chron. vi. 40, vii. 15: cf. Neh. i. 6, 11.

the voice of, &c.: see xxviii. 2; 'my supplicating cries' gives the sense of the Hebrew.

3. LORD: Heb. Jah (Yah): see on lxxxix. 8.

mark (**iniquities**): *lit.* 'keep' or 'watch' as in verse 6 'watchers,' 'keepers'): here 'take account of, in order to unish.' 'If thou shouldest act as watchman in reference to nen's sins,' &c.

stand: i. e. stand the test of being judged; see i. 5 (same erb).

4. But: render, 'Surely.'

That, &c.: Jehovah forgives that men may be led to fear Him. 'he forgiveness here meant is deliverance from trouble which is s outward sign, and with which this Psalmist is chiefly concerned.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
6 My soul *looketh* for the Lord,
More than watchmen *look* for the morning;
Yea, more than watchmen for the morning.
7 O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For with the LORD there is mercy,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
8 And he shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

131 A Song of Ascents; of David.
1 LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty;

5–8. *Strong hope of pardon and restoration.*

5 f. Render: 'I wait for Jehovah, my soul' (=I myself) 'wait for His word' (='promise'). 'With my (whole) soul wait I o Jehovah: more than,' &c.

And (in his word): omit with LXX, Pesh., Targ., and connec **in his word** with the preceding verse (see translation).

do I hope: connect with next verse as in translation above so LXX, Pesh., Targ., and most moderns.

6. watchmen: probably the city and not the temple watchme are meant: see on cxix. 48.

7. O Israel, &c.: though the Psalmist is the mouthpiece of th nation throughout this Psalm and the preceding, he occasionally as here, speaks as an individual, and, as such, addresses the nation

redemption: Heb. *peduth*; see on lxxiv. 2.

8. And he: in Hebrew the pronoun is emphatic: 'And He-He,' &c.

PSALM CXXXI.

Theme. Profession of childlike humility.

I. *Contents:* see *Theme.* The Psalm is, as Baethgen says a humble answer to the demand in Prov. xxiii. 26.

The speaker is an individual, and not the nation; otherwise th Psalm loses its charm, and the summons in verse 3 is senseless but see on this verse.

The Psalm is a beautiful expression of trust and contentment but, though a prayer seems implied, there is none expressed Perhaps some of the verses have dropped out.

Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too wonderful for me.
Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul; 2
Like a weaned child with his mother,
My soul is with me like a weaned child.
O Israel, hope in the Lord 3
From this time forth and for evermore.

A Song of Ascents. **132**

Lord, remember for David 1

II. *Authorship and Date.* There is no evidence as to the date of the Psalm.

1. The author does not explain what he means by the great matters which he once busied himself about: perhaps wealth, or high office in the state, or both. Suffering has subdued his lofty aspirations: he is now content with what Jehovah allots him. Sir. iii. 18 f. expands the thought of this verse.

exercise myself in: Heb. 'walk with,' 'to have to do with,' as with people we walk or live with; then, 'to busy oneself about.'

things too wonderful for me: 'things beyond my power to accomplish': see Deut. xvii. 8, xxx. 11.

2. my soul: this is preferable to the A. V. in this place. The soul is often spoken of as the organ of appetite, of desire. The Psalmist has stilled (*lit.* 'levelled,' see Isa. xxviii. 25) and quieted (*lit.* 'silenced') the soul, which aforetime soared and clamoured after high things. Now the soul has lost this longing, just as a weaned child its desire for its mother's milk.

3. A liturgical addition such as we have in iii. 9, &c.

Psalm CXXXII.

Theme. Jehovah promises to hear the people's prayer and, for David's sake, to restore their fortunes.

I. *Contents.* (1) Israel pleads with Jehovah that He may be faithful to the covenant made with David (verses 1–10).

(2) Jehovah answers the prayer by renewing the promises made to David and through him to the nation (verses 11–18).

There is a good deal of the dramatic element in the Psalm, and it is probable that its parts were sung by at least three different parties: verses 1–5 by a small section of the choir; verses 6–10 by a larger section; verses 11–18 being allotted to one individual, these verses containing the answer of Jehovah.

Ps. cxxxii differs from the other Pilgrim Psalms in its metre and

All his affliction;
2 How he sware unto the LORD,

---

matter, and also in its greater length. It is commonly thought, for these reasons, to stand outside the group.

This Psalm contains much that is reminiscent of Ps. lxxxix: see on that Psalm (*Contents*). In both there is the same intense longing for the fulfilment of the promise involved in the covenant made with David and his seed (2 Sam. vii). But in Ps. lxxxix there seems no sign of the early fulfilment of the promise. Here the words assigned to Jehovah (verses 11–18) seem to indicate that the promise has begun to be realized, though the early part of the Psalm shows that much of that promise remains unfulfilled. The nation is still dissatisfied, longing for what it has not. Perhaps some recent act of oppression on the part of the Persian or Syrian government prompted the Psalm.

II. *Authorship and Date.* Verses 8–10 are almost identical with the closing words of Solomon's dedicatory prayer recorded in 2 Chron. v. 41 f.: it has been therefore argued that Solomon composed the present Psalm to be sung at the dedication of the temple which he built, when the ark was taken into the *debir* or most holy place. But modern scholars agree that the Chronicler has borrowed from this Psalm. In the older and more purely historical books of Kings the words are not found. Moreover, the national distress and subjection implied in the Psalm do not suit the age of Solomon. The dependence of the Psalm on the post-exilic account of Jehovah's covenant with David (2 Sam. vii)[1] proves that the Psalm was written after the Exile, though whether in the time of Nehemiah or in the Maccabean age cannot be decided: see on verses 4 f., 10.

1–10. *The people's prayer grounded on the covenant with David.*

1. The prayer. Jehovah is entreated for the sake of David's merits to help the nation at this crisis. The doctrine that God will show favour to people on account of the merits of their ancestors was elaborated to a high degree in later Judaism[2]. It passed from Judaism into Roman Catholicism.

The form of expression in the present verse seems based on Neh. v. 19; xiii. 14, 22, 31, an argument for a late date.

This verse should be translated: 'O Jehovah, remember with regard to David all his wearisome toiling' (in connexion with Thy house).

All his affliction: the Hebrew means here 'his being hard worked.' The reference is to what David *did* in connexion with

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[1] See on Psalm lxxxix, Introd.

[2] Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, pp. 292 ff.

And vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:
Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, 3
Nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes, 4
Or slumber to mine eyelids;
Until I find out a place for the LORD, 5
A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob.

---

the temple, and not to what he *suffered*. LXX has 'meekness,' Pesh. 'humility' for **affliction** here: but it is David's zeal for the building of the temple that is spoken of.

2–5. *David's vow to build a house for Jehovah.*

2. he sware: there is no record in the historical books of the O.T. of such a vow. We have here probably a later tradition.

Mighty One of Jacob: the phrase is found elsewhere only in verse 5, Gen. xlix. 24, and ('Israel' for 'Jacob') in Isa. i. 24. If the M. T. is followed the phrase means 'the Hero' or 'Defender of Jacob' (i. e. of the nation). But we should probably (with Barth, Stade, Cheyne, &c.) vocalize differently in all the passages, and render 'the Steer of Jacob' (or 'Israel'), i. e. the God whom Israelites worship as others do the steer. The Massorites seem to have varied the spelling (*'ābir* for *'ăbbir*) to avoid any reference to steer-worship: cf. the M.T. vocalization of 'Molek' (the vowels of *boshet*) for 'Melek' (in the LXX and Pesh. Moloch).

3–5. *The contents of the oath or vow.*

3. tabernacle of my house: better, 'tent of my house,' i. e. the tent which is my house, 'genitive of apposition': see on cxviii. 15.

my bed: Heb. 'the couch of my bed,' or, 'the bed of my bed,' for both the Hebrew words denote 'bed.' Probably the first word is a marginal gloss which has crept into the text.

4. *Verbatim* from Prov. vi. 4; whence it has been seriously argued that Solomon, having written the one (?), must have written the other also! It is impossible to say which of the occurrences is the older, though Baethgen decides for Prov. vi. 4.

5. place: see 1 Chron. xv. 1. The ark was a symbol of the Divine presence: see on verse 8.

A tabernacle: *lit.* 'dwellings,' pl. 'of fullness,' i. e. the sanctuary with its enclosures and appendages. The Hebrew word in the singular (*Mishkan*) is the technical term in the Priestly Code for that elaborate tabernacle ornamented with tons of silver and gold which later Judaism regarded as the central sanctuary

6 Lo, we heard of it in Ephrathah:
We found it in the field of the wood.
7 We will go into his tabernacles;
We will worship at his footstool.
8 Arise, O LORD, into thy resting place;

---

during the wilderness life, its place being taken in J, E by *ohel*, a tent. The use of the word here favours a late date for the Psalm.

Mighty One of Jacob: render, 'Steer of Jacob': see on verse 2.

6 f. Here the people are dramatically represented as uttering the sentiments of David's contemporaries. They express their joy at what has taken place.

6. we heard of it: We found it: the pronoun 'it' can stand for nothing other than the ark, though the latter is not named before verse 8. The poet is so full of what he has his mind on that he forgets to name it, regardless of the needs of readers.

Ephrathah: a name given elsewhere to the district in which Beth-lehem lay: see Gen. xxxv. 16, 19, xlviii. 7; Ruth iv. 11; cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 12; Mic. v. 2. But the same name seems also to be used for the district in which Kirjath-jearim was situated. The word means 'fruitful' (region), and it might well be applied to more places than one. Delitzsch, Baethgen, and Duhm think that in Gen. xxxv. 16, 19, xlviii. 7 a third district more to the north must be intended.

field of the wood: better, 'the district of Jaar,' i.e. the neighbourhood of Kirjath-jearim (= 'city of the woods'); the word rendered 'fields' often = 'district.' It was at Kirjath-jearim that, in the house of Abinadab, the ark rested for many years (1 Sam. vii. 1 f.), until David removed it to Zion (1 Chron. xiii. 5 f.). It may be gathered from 1 Sam. vii. 1 f. that the ark was in the *neighbourhood* of Kirjath-jearim, and not in the city itself. This would well suit the theory that Ephrathah was the district embracing this city.

7. Render: 'Let us go into His dwelling place,
Let us worship at the footstool of His feet.'

go: Duhm reads 'bring (it).'

tabernacles: see on verse 5.

footstool: parallelism shows that it is the sanctuary that is meant by the word here as in xcix. 5 (see on), and not the ark.

8 f. The nation is made to speak as if it were present at the dedication of the temple by Solomon: see 1 Kings viii. In 2 Chron. vi. 41 f. verses 8–10 are introduced into Solomon's dedicatory prayer.

Thou, and the ark of thy strength.
Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; 9
And let thy saints shout for joy.
For thy servant David's sake 10
Turn not away the face of thine anointed.
The LORD hath sworn unto David in truth; 11
He will not turn from it:
Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

---

8. Arise: an allusion to the watchword used when the ark in the wilderness was set forward: see Num. x. 33, 35.

resting place: the ark owed its origin to the belief that Jehovah was present in it in a very special sense. It was a later conception which made the ark the receptacle of the tables of the law. After the Exile the ark is never more referred to in the historical books.

the ark of thy strength: better (according to Hebrew idiom), 'Thy strong ark'; 'strong' because by its presence the Israelites were enabled to conquer their foes: see 1 Sam. v. 7, vi. 19 ff.; and on lxxviii. 61.

9 f. Duhm holds that the Psalmist borrows from the Chronicler: but that is because the contrary view, which even Cheyne ⁽²⁾ adopts, would destroy his theory of the very late date of the Psalm.

9. priests: neither David nor Solomon could have recognized a special order of priests.

'To put on righteousness' = 'to be righteous': see verse 16 and Job xxix. 4.

saints: better, 'favoured ones'; see vol. i. p. 360 f.

In verse 10 the people seem to utter their own prayer in their own language.

10. Turn not, &c.: to turn away the face from any one who makes a request is to send him away disappointed.

thine anointed: perhaps Zerubbabel is meant, or, likelier, one of the priest-kings of a later time.

11–18. *Jehovah's answer to the prayer of the people; an adaptation of the promise to David.*

11. The LORD hath sworn: nothing is said in 2 Sam. vii about God's making an oath to confirm this promise: see lxxxix. 3 and on verse 2 (**he sware**).

in truth: 'in faithfulness' (adv. acc.). He has made an oath intending to keep it faithfully. Or the Hebrew noun translated 'truth' may be the object after the verb: 'Jehovah has sworn . . .

12 If thy children will keep my covenant
And my testimony that I shall teach them,
Their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.
13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion;
He hath desired it for his habitation.
14 This is my resting place for ever:
Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provision:
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 Her priests also will I clothe with salvation:
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17 There will I make the horn of David to bud
I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

---

what is true,' 'what is certain of execution': so LXX, Baethgen, &c. This makes it easier to explain the pronoun in **from it.**

12. It is a condition of the fulfilment of the vow that David's descendants shall obey the Divine law: see 2 Sam. vii. 14; 1 Kings viii. 25. In lxxxix. 30 ff. man's faithlessness is not allowed to interfere with Jehovah's faithfulness to His promise.

children: read, 'sons.'

my testimony: render (with LXX, Targ.), 'my ordinances'; plural for singular, though the Hebrew is somewhat irregular.

13. Jehovah chose Zion before He chose David. He will, therefore, not forsake Zion and His chosen people, nor permit the succession of kings to fail: see lxxxix. 67 ff.

14. See verse 8 with which it corresponds as fulfilment to prayer.

15. The material needs of the people will be seen to.

bless: the word of blessing was believed to be effective in producing, obtaining: see on *Imprecatory Psalms*, p. 216, and also *Magic, Divination, and Demonology among the Hebrews* by the present writer (pp. 32 ff.).

her provision: 'her' refers to Zion.

16 corresponds to verse 9: but deliverance takes the place of righteousness, a very common meaning of the latter word in Isa. xl f.

17. to bud: to spring forth: David will have horns grow, i.e. his horn will be exalted: he will prosper and be full of vigour. Concerning the exalting of the horn see on lxxv. 4, and cf. cxii. 9.

lamp: the burning of a lamp in the house is a sign of the

His enemies will I clothe with shame: 18
But upon himself shall his crown flourish.

A Song of Ascents; of David. **133**

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is 1
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

---

continuance and prosperity of the home (xviii. 29); see on cxix. 105, and cf. 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4; 2 Kings viii. 19.

18. clothe with shame: not with **righteousness** (verse 9), nor with **salvation** (verse 16).

himself: i. e. David. He is named here as representing his successors. They were in him, and promises made to him were made to them. The feeling of solidarity prevailed in the ancient world to a much greater extent than in our days; see on cix. 9–15.

his crown: the royal crown as representing the kingly office is obviously meant. LXX, Jero. read 'my crown,' i. e. the crown which, I Jehovah, have for David and his sons.

flourish: better, 'shall glitter.' Contrast what is said of the crown in lxxxix. 39.

PSALM CXXXIII.

Theme. The loveliness of brotherly fellowship.

I. *Contents*: see *Theme.* This Psalm stands in close connexion with Pss. cxxvii (2) and cxxviii: these last were written to celebrate the blessings of large families. This one sings the praise of good fellowship between the brothers of the same family.

During the three great festivals brothers of the same family came together from widely separated parts of the world. The intercourse at such reunions must have been unspeakably sweet.

Authorship and Date. One or two characteristics of late Hebrew suggest that the Psalm is a good deal later than the Exile, but nothing more can be said on this head.

1. Render: 'How fine and pleasant it is for brothers to sit together.'

good: the Hebrew word has much the same meaning as the Greek word *kalos*, which combines within it the ethical and aesthetical. 'Fine' seems the best English equivalent.

brethren: better, 'brothers.'

to dwell: the Hebrew means both 'to sit' and 'to dwell': the former suits best here.

together in unity: this is an attempt at rendering two Hebrew words which Driver translates 'also together.' The first of them (*gam* = 'also') is absent from the ancient versions,

2 It is like the precious oil upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard;
That came down upon the skirt of his garments;
3 Like the dew of Hermon,
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion:
For there the LORD commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore.

---

and in Hebrew it is almost impossible to translate it. Omitting this word we have remaining 'together,' the rest ('in unity') falling out. So Duhm.

2. The pleasant influence of this brotherly fellowship is likened to the fragrance of the oil which was poured on Aaron at his appointment to office: this oil would overflow on his beard and on the collar of his official robe; see Exod. xxix. 7; Lev. viii. 12, xxi. 10. The oil was sprinkled, not poured, in the case of other priests; see Exod. xxix. 21.

the precious oil: *lit.* 'the good oil,' i.e. according to Hebrew idiom, 'the best oil.' It is, of course, the perfumed anointing oil that is meant. D. H. Müller and Baethgen translate 'aromatic oil,' connecting the Hebrew word rendered 'precious' with an Arabic word denoting 'an aromatic root.'

That came down: it is the **beard** and not the **oil** that 'came down,' &c.: so the Hebrew accents. There should, therefore, be a mere comma after **Aaron's beard.**

skirt: Heb. 'mouth,' i.e. the opening in the high-priest's garment through which the head was pushed; see Exod. xxviii. 32, xxxix. 23; Job xxx. 18.

3. the dew of Hermon: for about half the year Palestine depends for its irrigation upon the dew, which descends so plentifully in the night that in the morning the land looks often as though a heavy shower had fallen. Hermon is noted for the abundance of the dew that falls on its slopes.

upon the mountains of Zion: a physical connexion between the dew of Hermon and that of Zion, alleged by many, does not exist in fact, and is not implied here. The dewy mist of Hermon has never been known to be carried to mount Zion, which is some 200 miles to the south. It is 'Hermon-like dew' that is meant, 'dew as of Hermon': copious, refreshing, fertilizing, as is the dew that falls on Hermon. There is nothing in the Hebrew to exclude this, and the sense requires it.

For there, &c.: the mention of Zion reminds the Psalmis

A Song of Ascents. **134**

Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the 1
LORD,
Which by night stand in the house of the LORD.
Lift up your hands to the sanctuary, 2
And bless ye the LORD.

---

of the fact that the temple was on Zion (see Additional Note, p. 368), and God was thought in a special way to dwell and dispense blessings in that temple.

life for evermore: does this mean for the individual a life that is to be endless? In the light of the whole Psalter one may answer 'no.' In the temple Jehovah dispenses life for ever: it is His dispensing that is for evermore, and that too must be taken with the limitations imposed by the thing itself. 'For ever' in the O. T. has a relative sense, which has in each particular case to be separately investigated.

PSALM CXXXIV.

Theme. A holy greeting and its answer.

I. *Contents.* (1) A greeting addressed by the congregation to those who were conducting the nightly service of the temple (verses 1 f.).

(2) Reply of the leader of the temple ministrants (verse 3).

The Psalm seems to have been sung antiphonally, being divided as above.

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm supplies no special criteria for an opinion as to its age and origin.

1 f. *Greeting of the congregation.*

1. servants of the LORD: the next clause shows that temple ministrants are meant, i. e. priests and Levites.

by night: therefore there were services in the temple at night: see 1 Chron. ix. 33.

stand in the house of the LORD: 'To stand before Jehovah' is a technical expression for the discharging of their official duties by the priests and Levites: Deut. x. 8; Heb. x. 11.

2. Lift up your hands: i. e. in prayer; see xxviii. 2, cxli. 2, &c.

to the sanctuary: the temple building, or house: here regarded as the *qiblah*, or the place towards which prayer should be directed; see on cxxi. 1 (**unto the mountains**).

3. The reply of the leader of the temple ministrants.

3 The LORD bless thee out of Zion ;
Even he that made heaven and earth.

135 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise ye the name of the LORD ;
Praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD :
2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD,
In the courts of the house of our God.
3 Praise ye the LORD ; for the LORD is good :

(**The LORD bless**) **thee** : read 'you' : or understand 'thee' distributively.

Even he that made, &c. : as in cxxi. 2^b and cxxiv. 8^b.

PSALM CXXXV.

Theme. A summons to praise Jehovah on account of what He has in nature and in history revealed Himself to be.

I. *Contents.* The present Psalm is, like Pss. xcvii f. and cvii a mosaic composed of extracts from other parts of the O. T. strung together for liturgical purposes. The following is the genera order of thought :

(1) A summons to praise Jehovah (verses 1-4).

(2) Jehovah's power and sovereignty as made known in nature (5-7), and in the history of the nation (8-12) (verses 5-12).

(3) Jehovah's transcendence : the helplessness of heathen deities (verses 13-18).

(4) Summons to praise Jehovah (verses 19-21).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Psalm is certainly a very late one, as is proved by its dependence on other Scriptures, and by several characteristics of late Hebrew.

1-4. *Summons to praise Jehovah.*

Bickell, Duhm, and Cheyne(2) separate verses 1 f. from the rest of the Psalm, making of these two verses a companion temple Psalm to Ps. cxxxiv : surely, however, for no good reason.

1 = cxiii. 1 with transposition of clauses.

Praise ye, &c. : belongs to the title and not to the Psalm : see 'Hallelujah Psalms,' pp. 226 f.

2. 2^a = cxxxiv. 1^b.

2^b added by mistake to cxxxiv. 1^b in the LXX.

Those addressed include the lower officials of the temple, the Levites as well as the priests.

3. Praise ye the LORD : Heb. 'Hallelujah' : elsewhere this

Sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.
For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, 4
And Israel for his peculiar treasure.
For I know that the LORD is great, 5
And that our Lord is above all gods.
Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that hath he done, 6
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.
He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the 7
earth;
He maketh lightnings for the rain;
He bringeth forth the wind out of his treasuries.

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expression occurs only in the Psalm title, though it occurs by mistake at the end of some Psalms.

for it is pleasant: better, 'for it (the name) is lovely,' i. e. God Himself as known is desirable; see liv. 6. Many explain 'it is pleasant to sing praises'; see cxlvii. 1.

4. Based on Deut. vii. 6, with a possible reference to Exod. xix. 5.

5–7. *Jehovah as seen in nature.*

5 f. These two verses are probably the utterances of two different scribes.

5. For I, &c.: better, 'For I—I know': the pronoun is emphatic in Hebrew.

our Lord is above all gods: it is quite certain that, at all events in the religion of Israel before the Exile, the real existence of heathen gods was taken for granted: it was their power and wisdom in comparison with Jehovah, and their right to be ecognized as gods, that was so stoutly denied: see Exod. xv. 11; Deut. iii. 24, x. 17; 1 Kings viii. 23; Isa. xix. 1, &c.

6. 6^a = cxv. 3^b.

6^b based on Exod. xx. 4.

deeps: the subterranean abysmal waters; see Introd. to Ps. iv: *Hebrew Cosmology*, pp. 174 f.

7. From Jer. x. 13 (= li. 16).

the ends of the earth: from the sea which was thought to ound the earth; cf. 1 Kings xviii. 44.

lightnings for the rain: i. e. lightnings accompanying the ain. The preposition rendered 'for' (*l*) has the same force in ccles. vii. 27. It was always a mystery to the ancients that fire nd water seemed to come from the sky together, though the rain was not heated nor the fire extinguished.

8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.
9 He sent signs and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.
10 Who smote many nations,
And slew mighty kings;
11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
And Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan:
12 And gave their land for an heritage,
An heritage unto Israel his people.
13 Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever;
Thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.
14 For the LORD shall judge his people,
And repent himself concerning his servants.

15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,

8–12. *Jehovah's power revealed in history.*

9. into the midst of thee, O Egypt: an explanatory gloss: its omission is required by the rhythm: cf. cxvi. 19.

10–12. Cf. cxxxvi. 17–22.

10. many: this sense is supported by Deut. vii. 1. Hitzig and Delitzsch translate 'great.'

11. Amorites: the name stands here in its narrow sense for peoples living east of the Jordan.

12. an heritage: the repetition of this word is after the manner of the 'Royal' and 'Pilgrim Psalms' ('anadiplosis'): see on xciii. 4, and cf. xcvi. 13, xcviii. 13, cxxii. 2–4.

13–18. *Jehovah contrasted with idols.*

13. Based on Exod. iii. 15; see xxx. 4, cii. 12.

memorial: a synonym of **name** as in Hos. ii. 6. 'Jehovah as He is thought of,' i. e. as He is revealed (name). The Hebrew verb which usually means 'to remember' means primarily 'to think about.'

14. Cited word for word from Deut. xxxii. 36: cf. xc. 13. The **For** is suitable in the original connexion, but hardly so here: it is brought in with the quotation. We might render it here 'Surely.'

15–18. Taken from cxv. 4–8 with very few changes (see notes on).

The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not; 16
Eyes have they, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not; 17
Neither is there any breath in their mouths.
They that make them shall be like unto them; 18
Yea, every one that trusteth in them.
O house of Israel, bless ye the LORD: 19
O house of Aaron, bless ye the LORD:
O house of Levi, bless ye the LORD: 20
Ye that fear the LORD, bless ye the LORD.
Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, 21
Who dwelleth at Jerusalem.
Praise ye the LORD.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: **136**

19-21. *All Israel summoned to praise Jehovah.* For the fourfold call here see on cxv. 9-11. In the latter the 'House of Levi' is omitted.

21. Blessed: i. e. virtually 'praised': see on lxxxiv. 5.

PSALM CXXXVI.

Theme: same as Ps. cxxxv.

I. *Title.* The LXX has 'Hallelujah' in the title.

II. *Contents.* (1) Summons to give thanks (verses 1-3).
(2) Jehovah's love and power in creation (verses 4-9).
(3) Jehovah's love and power in the history of Israel (verses 10-26).

The present Psalm is less original than even the preceding one, which it resembles. The refrain at the end of each verse confirms the impression that the Psalm was put together for liturgical purposes.

Verses 19-22 are an interpolation from Ps. cxxxv, and must be omitted. Without them we have as many verses as there are letters (consonants) in the Hebrew alphabet (see Introd. to Ps. cxxxix), and in verses 10-18 we have three triplets dealing in chronological order with as many episodes of Israel's life from Egypt to Canaan: (1) the departure from Egypt (verses 10-12);

For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
2 O give thanks unto the God of gods:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
3 O give thanks unto the Lord of lords:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
4 To him who alone doeth great wonders:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
5 To him that by understanding made the heavens:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
6 To him that spread forth the earth above the waters:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
7 To him that made great lights:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
8 The sun to rule by day:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
9 The moon and stars to rule by night
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

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(2) the passage of the Red Sea (verses 13-15); (3) guidance and protection on the journey to Canaan (verses 16-18).

Milton's rendering of this Psalm ('Let us with a gladsome mind') was composed when the author was but fifteen years of age.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See on Ps. cxxxv (*Authorship and Date*). In Jewish liturgies this Psalm has been called 'The Great Hallel': but this term has been variously understood; see pp. 226, 232.

1-3. *A call to give thanks.*

1 = cvi. 1 = cvii. 1 = cviii. 1.

2 f. from Deut. x. 17.

4-9. *Jehovah as creator.*

4. See lxxii. 18, lxxxvi. 10.

great wonders: better, 'great things'; the adjective (neut. pl.) means by itself 'great things': the other word is a marginal gloss, and rhythm requires its omission.

5. From Prov. iii. 19; Jer. x. 12.

6. Based on Isa. xlii. 5, xliv. 24.

the earth above the waters: see on cxxxv. 6.

7-9 follow Gen. i. 14-16.

9. and stars: omitted for metrical reasons by Bickell, &c.

To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn : 10
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
And brought out Israel from among them : 11
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm : 12
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
To him which divided the Red Sea in sunder : 13
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
And made Israel to pass through the midst of it : 14
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea : 15
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
To him which led his people through the wilderness : 16
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
To him which smote great kings : 17
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
And slew famous kings : 18
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :
Sihon king of the Amorites : 19
For his mercy *endureth* for ever :

10–22. Almost word for word from cxxxv. 8–12, on which see notes.

13. divided: Heb. 'cut in two' : the same verb is used of cutting in two halves the child brought to Solomon for judgement, 1 Kings iii. 25.

in sunder: Heb. 'into segments' : the noun is cognate with the verb rendered 'divide,' and occurs in Gen. xv. 17.

15. The only verse in the O. T. which seems to give any countenance to the common belief that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was drowned in the Red Sea : but even this verse does not justify that belief.

overthrew: Heb. 'shook off' : the word is taken from Exod. xiv. 27, but in that, the original passage, Pharaoh is not mentioned. Baethgen omits in the present verse **his host**. In that case **Pharaoh** would mean 'the Egyptians' (the word in Exodus).

16. See Deut. viii. 15.

18. famous: read, 'mighty' as in cxxxv. 10.

19–22. Probably an addition from Ps. cxxxv; see under *Contents*, p. 319.

20 And Og king of Bashan:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
21 And gave their land for an heritage:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
22 Even an heritage unto Israel his servant:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
23 Who remembered us in our low estate:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever:
24 And hath delivered us from our adversaries:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
25 He giveth food to all flesh:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.
26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven:
For his mercy *endureth* for ever.

137 By the rivers of Babylon,

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21. their land: whose? A verse has clearly dropped out, viz. that corresponding to the third line (*stichos*) in cxxxv. 11, 'And all the kingdoms of Canaan.' It is the land belonging to these kingdoms that is meant here as in cxxxv. 12.

22. Israel his servant: in cxxxv. 12 'Israel his people': see Isa. xli. 8, &c.

23-26. *Jehovah as deliverer and as universal provider.*

23. in our low estate: 'whenever our fortunes were low.' There is no specific reference to the bondage in Egypt, or to the captivity in Babylon.

24. delivered us: the third verb we have met in the Psalter having the sense 'deliver': see on lxxiv. 2, where the three words are differentiated. The root meaning of the present Hebrew verb, as of its Arabic cognate (*faraqa*), is 'to cut away,' then 'to separate,' and at length 'to set free from bondage,' and the like.

25. all flesh: i.e. all Jews: the Psalm never steps outside the national bounds.

the God of heaven: so Ezra i. 2; Neh. i. 4, ii. 4; see on cxxiii. 1 and Introd. to Ps. civ, 'Hebrew Cosmology.'

Verse 26 rounds off the Psalm by repeating the words with which it opens.

Psalm CXXXVII.

Theme. Love of Zion and hatred of her foes.

There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof 2
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive required of us songs, 3

I. *Contents.* (1) The exiled Jews requested by the Babylonians to sing and play (verses 1–3).

(2) The Jews' refusal and its reason (verses 4–6).

(3) Vengeance invoked on Babylon and Edom, the foes of Zion (verses 7–9).

II. *Authorship and Date.* This Psalm was written long enough after the Babylonian Exile to permit the suffering of that Exile to become the subject of meditation and song. The writer was probably led to sing this song because he and his compatriots were passing through an experience comparable with that of their ancestors in Babylon. Whether it is the ill-treatment of the Samaritan party or of the Syrian party of a later time the Psalm itself does not enable us to determine. Dillmann (in class) maintained that Isa. lxv f. and the present Psalm are products of the Exile itself and of the same set of circumstances.

1–3. *The Jews in Babylon asked to sing.* The perfect tense of the verb shows that the scene described belongs to past days.

1. rivers of Babylon: i. e. canals such as covered Babylon: perhaps the tributaries of the Euphrates are also included. Alongside one of these coolness and solitude were likely to be found.

sat down: sitting on the ground was a common posture for mourners; see Job ii. 8; Isa. iii. 26, xlvii. 1, 5.

Perhaps the reference is to synagogues built along river banks, where water for purification would be within reach; see Acts xvi. 13, and Joseph. *Antiq.* xiv. 10. 23; see on lxxiv. 8.

2. willows: render, 'poplars'; these last abound in Babylon. **(in the midst) thereof:** i. e. of Babylon.

We hanged up, &c.: Wellhausen asks, Why then did they not eave their harps at home? The answer is that they needed them o accompany their Psalm-singing with. They refused to sing, nd hung up their harps simply because they were unwilling to ing their songs of prayer and praise for the mere amusement of heir heathen captors, who had unexpectedly come upon them: ee verse 3.

harps: render, 'lyres'; see Introd. p. 28.

3. For: introducing the reason why they hanged up their harps nd refused to sing.

songs: *lit.* 'words or things' (i. e. instances) 'of songs'; o = 'some songs'; see on cv. 27, where the same idiom occurs.

And they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
4 How shall we sing the LORD's song
In a strange land?
5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *her cunning*.
6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.
7 Remember, O LORD, against the children of Edom
The day of Jerusalem;

The Babylonians asked the exiles to give them 'some songs' they would hardly ask for the words without the music.

they that wasted us: read (changing one consonant) 'they that plundered us,' i. e. robbed us of our country: so Pesh., Targ. the LXX, and most moderns. Other readings have been proposed

mirth: LXX 'a hymn': some such word is required by th parallelism. Probably we should read *mismor* ('a Psalm').

songs of Zion: temple songs, such as the Psalter contains.

4-6. *The Jews refuse to sing.*

4. the LORD'S song: i. e. one made for the temple and fo the feasts and fasts connected with it, and not intended to be sun in any foreign land. But the answer proves inconsistency, fo these Jews had brought their harps with them because they in tended to sing some of Jehovah's songs, and the request itsel was made because they had been heard singing such songs. Th answer may mean: 'How can we, driven from our own home, b expected to sing songs of gladness in a foreign land?'

5. forget: read, 'wither,' transposing the Hebrew consonants so Graetz, &c.

6. If I prefer not, &c.: render: 'If I put not Jerusalen above the principal things I rejoice in.'

7-9. *Vengeance invoked on Edom and Babylon.* 'The coals c fire which this Psalmist scatters among Israel's foes are not thos which Christ's servants are bidden to heap on their enemies' heads (Alex. McLaren).

7. Remember . . . against: i. e. remember with a view t punishing; see Neh. vi. 14, xiii. 29.

The day of Jerusalem: i. e. the day when Jerusalem wa

Who said, Rase it, rase it,
Even to the foundation thereof.
O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed; 8
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones 9
Against the rock.

A Psalm of David. **138**

I will give thee thanks with my whole heart: 1
Before the gods will I sing praises unto thee.

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destroyed; see xxxvii. 13; Obad. 12. Cf. 'the day of Jehovah' in Amos. Among the Arabs 'day' stands for 'battle,' &c.

Rase it: *lit.* 'Lay it bare,' i. e. of its houses and inhabitants; see Hab. iii. 13.

8. that art to be destroyed: the Hebrew participle can be so read: but it is better to change one vowel and to read, 'thou devastator': so Sym., Pesh., Targ., Baethgen, &c.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

Theme. Thanks for Jehovah's lovingkindness and faithfulness.

I. *Title.* Pss. cxxxviii–cxlv are all, in the title, connected with the name 'David.' Probably these Davidic Psalms were once united with those in the earlier books to form a David hymn-book.

II. *Contents.* (1) Thanksgiving to Jehovah for His love and constancy (verses 1–3).

(2) Prediction that all earth's kings will worship Him (verses 4–6).

(3) Confident hope for the future (verses 7 f.).

III. *Authorship and Date.* The expectation that all kings will acknowledge Jehovah is one of which no pre-exilic portion of the O. T. shows any trace. The present Psalmist seems to betray acquaintance with Pss. xxii. 28, cii. 15 f.; Isa. xl ff. and Zech. viii. 23: this fact and some peculiarities of style stamp the Psalm as a late one: it may well be Maccabean.

1–3. *Thanksgiving to Jehovah.*

1. 1^a is virtually the same as ix. 1.

I will give thee: add, 'O Jehovah,' with the ancient versions. After 1^a the LXX adds, 'For thou hast heard the words of my mouth,' no doubt a dittograph (adapted) from verse 4.

gods: LXX 'angels,' suggesting a reading 'kings,' which in

2 I will worship toward thy holy temple,
And give thanks unto thy name for thy lovingkindness
and for thy truth:
For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
3 In the day that I called thou answeredst me,
Thou didst encourage me with strength in my soul.
4 All the kings of the earth shall give thee thanks, O LORD,
For they have heard the words of thy mouth.

---

the Hebrew is written almost exactly like 'angels.' 'Before kings' suits the context admirably (see verse 4), and is probably to be read: see on cxix. 46. 'gods,' if retained, would mean the idols introduced into Jerusalem by the Syrians. Even before them would the Psalmist praise Jehovah.

2. toward thy holy temple: see on cxxi. 1.

truth: better, 'faithfulness.'

thou hast magnified, &c.: the Hebrew means: 'Thou hast fulfilled thy promise in a way exceeding what our knowledge of thee led us to expect.'

word: the Hebrew term often means 'promise.'

name: revealed, and therefore known character.

It is better, however, to read for **thy word** 'thy faithfulness' (so Graetz), and for **thy name** 'thy heavens' (Hupfeld), rendering: 'Thou hast magnified thy faithfulness above all thy heavens.' The changes needed in Hebrew for this are not great, but the improvement in the sense is considerable. For the phrase 'above the heavens' see lvii. 5, 11, cviii. 5: cf. cviii. 4, cxiii. 4; and for the meaning of the phrase see on cviii. 5. 'To magnify faithfulness' is to show it on a large scale.

3. Thou didst encourage me, &c.: read with Jero., 'Thou hast enlarged me in my soul with strength.' The change in Hebrew involves the altering of one letter for another exceedingly like it. The verb obtained occurs in xviii. 36. In xc. 10 there is a similar change in a noun ('extent' for 'pride'). The verb in the M.T. in the present clause can mean only 'to make arrogant' or 'proud,' or something akin to this. The LXX, Pesh., and Targ. read, 'Thou madest me great,' as in the M.T. of xviii. 35. 'To enlarge with strength' = 'to give one the feeling of freedom and strength.'

4-6. *Prediction that all earth's kings will worship Israel's God.*

4. For they have heard: render: 'When they have heard,' &c.

Yea, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD; 5
For great is the glory of the LORD.
For though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto 6
the lowly:
But the haughty he knoweth from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; 7
Thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of
mine enemies,
And thy right hand shall save me.
The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: 8
Thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever;
Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. **139**

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*. 1

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5. ways: His methods of dealing with men, as in ciii. 7.

6. yet hath he respect unto: Heb. 'yet sees He.' The R.V. translates from the LXX.

Jehovah is not too high to be concerned about the lowly: note the word-play.

he knoweth: read (with Duhm), 'He cuts down,' i. e. He destroys: the change in the Hebrew text is but slight.

7 f. *His confidence for the future.*

7. trouble: *lit.* 'straitness,' then 'distress'; see on cvii. 6.

thou wilt revive me: better, 'thou wilt keep me alive.' This is the sense here, though the Hebrew yields either: see on cxix. 25. Jehovah will not allow the Psalmist's foes to compass his death; see next clause.

8. The LORD will perfect, &c.: i.e. He will carry out His purpose for me completely. It is better, however, to read (with LXX, Targ., &c.) 'recompenses me,' changing the final letter of the verb for another resembling it, as most moderns do in lvii. 2. See on cxvi. 7, where the verb thus obtained occurs.

works: render, 'work,' though the Hebrew can mean either. Israel is what is intended.

PSALM CXXXIX.

Theme. Jehovah's omniscience and omnipresence.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's omniscience shown by the knowledge He has of man's outward and inward life (verses 1–6).

(2) Jehovah's omnipresence illustrated (verses 7–12).

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
3 Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
4 For there is not a word in my tongue,

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(3) Explanation of Jehovah's concern for man—He created him (verses 13-18).

(4) The writer's hatred of the wicked, and his prayer that Jehovah may slay them (verses 19-24).

II. *Authorship and Date.* The Aramaisms with which the Psalm abounds, and the speculative spirit pervading it, suggesting Greek influence, unite in showing that the Psalm is a late one, not improbably a product of the Maccabean age, during which Greek culture had much vogue in Palestine.

Ibn Ezra described this Psalm as the 'Crown of the Psalter,' and Reuss would have thought as highly of it were it not for the 'damning' section, verses 19-24. If this section is, however, a genuine part of the Psalm, it is probably an addition suggested by the contrast between the beauty of God's natural world and the moral deformity due to sin. Without it we have twenty-two verses left (so Ps. cxxxvi, omitting verses 19-22), as many as there are letters (consonants) in the Hebrew alphabet: it becomes thus, in a secondary way, an alphabetic acrostic Psalm as Lam. v (cf. Ps. cxxxvi)—an argument for treating these verses as an interpolation.

1-6. *God's omniscience.*

1. searched: see verse 23; Jer. xvii. 10: and cf. Ps. xvii. 3.

(known) *me*: the pronoun 'me' is found in the ancient versions, and must be restored in the M. T., since the rhythm as well as the sense requires it.

2. Thou knowest: 'thou' in the Hebrew is emphatic: 'thou—thou knowest.'

my downsitting and mine uprising: i. e. 'my entire life' see cxxvii. 2; Deut. vi. 6.

my thought: the original word here is Aramaic; it occurs nowhere else in the O. T. except in verse 17, where the plural is used: its strict meaning is 'inclination,' 'disposition,' 'wish.'

afar off: see cxxxviii. 6.

3. Thou searchest out: Heb. 'winnowest,' 'siftest.' The Jewish exegetes connect with a noun = 'circlet,' 'border,' and render as A. V., 'Thou compassest.' Duhm connects with a noun = 'span,' and translates, 'Thou hast measured (in spans)' or 'measured out.'

my path: Heb. 'my going,' which suits **my lying down.**

But, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before, 5
And laid thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; 6
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from thy spirit? 7
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: 8
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning, 9
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me, 10
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, 11

---

5. **beset me:** 'hemmed me in': the verb is used to describe the action of an army besieging a town, 'Thou hast besieged me—there is no escaping from thee.'

6. *Such* **knowledge,** &c.: i. e. the knowing on my part of what thou knowest; not the knowledge which is in thee.

7–12. *Jehovah's omnipresence.*

7. God's **spirit** and His **presence** (*lit.* 'face') mean 'God Himself.' In post-Biblical Hebrew 'face' (*Panim*) became one of the many names for God.

8. See Job xvii. 13^b, xxvi. 5 f.; Isa. lviii. 5; Jer. xxiii. 24; Amos ix. 2.

If I ascend, &c.: as Enoch or Elijah.

If I make my bed in Sheol: *Sheol* = Hades, regarded as the land of rest: see on lxxxvi. 13, and see pp. 15 ff.

9. **wings of the morning:** to the ancients (Semites, Greeks, Romans, &c.) the goddess of the dawn had wings with which she arose out of the Eastern ocean, and, in the course of the day, covered the whole sky. The Psalmist makes a happy use of this imagery, without in the least compromising his monotheism.

sea: the one sea known to the Hebrews was the Mediterranean. Hence the word came to mean, as here, the west: 'though like the dawn he should travel from east to west,' &c.

11 f. Render: 'And if I should say only let darkness cover me And the light about me be night, (12) Even the darkness darkens not from thee, But the night gives forth light as (does) the day.'

11. **overwhelm:** the Hebrew word (so LXX) occurs in Gen.

And the light about me shall be night;
12 Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike *to thee.*
13 For thou hast possessed my reins:
Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
14 I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
Wonderful are thy works;
And that my soul knoweth right well.

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iii. 15, and means 'to bruise.' Making a slight change we obtain the suitable sense 'cover,' 'overwhelm' (with its old meaning).

12. Verse 11 gives the protasis or supposition, the present verse the apodosis or result. Verse 11^b^ has been wrongly explained as containing the apodosis to verse 11^a^, verse 12 simply continuing it.

shineth: better, 'puts forth light'; though the Hebrew can mean either.

13–18. *Jehovah's power and wisdom manifested in man's creation.* Verses 13 f. should (with Hitzig, &c.) be transposed.

13. For: if this verse is kept in its present position the **For** implies that God knows all about man because He created him. But creatorship could not, as such, account for omnipresence. Better render 'Surely': but, best of all, change the order of verses 13 f.

possessed: better, 'formed,' this is the primary sense of the verb. See on lxxiv. 2, where the same verb is properly rendered 'purchased.' Dillmann's word in class (1892) was '*bereitet*' = 'prepared.'

reins: 'kidneys,' the supposed seat of the emotions: see on lxxiii. 2. Here, however, the internal organs in general seem to be embraced. The creation of man was to the ancients, as it well might be to their children, a profound mystery: see Job x 8–11.

covered: rather as R.Vm., 'knit me together.' The thought is of the interlacing of bones, sinews, and muscles: see Job x. 11.

14. I will give thanks, &c.: better, 'I give thanks.'

for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: so the M.T. and Dillmann (in class). But it is better (with most ancient authorities and also most moderns) to read and render: 'for thou art fearfully wonderful.'

my soul = 'myself': see on lxxviii. 18.

My frame was not hidden from thee, 15
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance, 16
And in thy book were all *my members* written,

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15. frame: read (changing one vowel), 'my bone,' in the sense of 'I myself.' The word 'bone' stands for the entire personality in vi. 3 and xxxv. 10, in both which passages as well as in the present verse 'bone' and 'soul' are in parallelism and denote the person. See also Prov. iii. 8, xiv. 30, &c., and on lxxviii. 18.

made in secret: see Job i. 21; Sir. xl. 1.

curiously wrought: the Hebrew word means 'embroidered with threads of different colours.' The reference seems to be to the red vein marks on the body. The idea of weaving as well as that of variegated colours lies in the root.

in the lowest parts of the earth: i. e. the womb. Gunkel says Sheol is meant, holding that here and in Job i. 21 the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls is taught. But in the present verse it is the body that is specially spoken of, and this is formed in the womb. The poet compares the womb to Sheol, describing it in similar terms (see lxiii. 9; Isa. xliv. 23), because it is so remote from light and general knowledge. The doctrine in question is, however, taught in Wisdom viii. 20: cf. Verg. *Aen.* vi. 713 ff., 884.

16. Render: 'Thy eyes saw my imperfect substance, And in thy book were all of them written (viz.) Days which were sketched out, Though (as yet) there was not one of them for me.'

unperfect substance: the one Hebrew word thus translated (*golem*) denotes 'an undeveloped embryo,' and in post-Biblical Hebrew, which has it often, its meaning is 'an unshaped mass,' 'an unfinished vessel' (of metal, &c.). It is a quite different word that is rendered 'substance' in verse 15, though, in the A.V., 'substance' is the rendering of both words.

book: God has a book in which He records the tears of His suffering people (lvi. 8), and wherein are written the names of those who are to be kept alive (lxix. 28). Here the days marked out for the life of the undeveloped substance are written. Before a man is born God has written down the exact number of days he has to live. Of course the language is poetical. No one would infer from Ps. lvi. 8 that the Psalmist wished God to examine one of those Roman tear-bottles, so common throughout the Roman world, which he—the Psalmist—had filled with his own tears!

Among the Babylonians also the doctrine of predestination was conveyed through the imagery of a god (Nabu = Nebo) writing

Which day by day were fashioned,
When as yet there was none of them.
17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
18 If I should count them, they are more in number than
the sand:
When I awake, I am still with thee.
19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:

on books or tablets the lives which men are to live. But in Babylonian mythology it is connected with magic[1]. The same conception played a large part in later Judaism; see 4 Ezra (Apoc.) xiv. 50; Enoch (Ethiopian version) xii. 3 f., xv. 1, xc. 1; Luke x. 20; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xvii. 8, xx. 12, 15, xxi. 27.

were all *my members* written: the word 'members' in the E.VV. refers to the members which were to arise out of the embryo: but the word is not in the Hebrew, and we must Aramaicwise seek the subject of the verb in the next clause. There is no need to change the text as Duhm does.

When as yet, &c.: so the *keth.*: the unnecessary correction of the Massorites (*qr.*) would read 'and for it' (i. e. the **imperfect substance**) 'there was one' ('day to be born,' see Job iii. 1) 'among them.' I find that in at least three cases out of four the *keth.* is preferable to the *qr.* or correction of the Massorites.

The words 'for me' (**unto me**), which in the Heb. begin verse 17, must be attached to verse 16, omitting the 'and' (**also**).

17. How precious: better, 'How weighty' (so the Aramaic cognate). God's thoughts can neither be weighed nor numbered.

thoughts: see on verse 2.

sum: Heb. 'sums,' pl. of fullness: 'the large sum of them.' In the LXX the verse is thus rendered: 'These friends' (same consonants as **thoughts**), 'O God, were greatly honoured by me: Their principalities were made very strong.'

19–24. *The Psalmist's abhorrence of wicked men, and his prayer that Jehovah may exterminate them.* The creation-song in Ps. civ has a similar ending (see civ. 35). If we remove the section altogether the rest of the Psalm makes a complete and charming poem. Verses 19–24 may have been tacked on for liturgical purposes in a time of bitter (Syrian?) persecution; see on Ps. cix (Introd.) concerning 'Vindictive Psalms.'

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[1] See *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*^{3}, pp. 405 f. (Zimmern).

Depart from me therefore, ye bloodthirsty men.
For they speak against thee wickedly, 20
And thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.
Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? 21
And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
I hate them with perfect hatred: 22
I count them mine enemies.
Search me, O God, and know my heart: 23
Try me, and know my thoughts:

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19. Render: 'Oh that thou wouldest slay the wicked, O God, And that murderers' (*lit.* 'men of blood') 'would depart from me.'

Depart: the smallest of the Hebrew consonants (*yodh*) has fallen out from the beginning of the verb. We must restore and connect the imperfect thus obtained with 19^a as a continuation of the wish: so most moderns.

20. Render: 'For they rebel against thee (though) in a scheming way: Thy enemies hate (thee, though) to no purpose.'

they speak: read, 'they rebel,' changing one vowel. Hebrew grammar as well as sense requires this.

wickedly: Heb. 'according to plan, or purpose.' They rebel, but they do it wisely; i. e. they hide from public view their true spirit.

thine enemies: the word in the M.T. means in Hebrew 'thy cities': in Aramaic (see Dan. iv. 16) 'thy enemies.' The first word in the verse (= 'For') has an Aramaic meaning.

take *thy name* in vain: the Hebrew is simply 'take to no purpose,' which is senseless, though some read 'thy name' for **thine enemies.** I propose 'hate (thee),' rearranging the consonants and adding a vowel. A Hebrew scholar will see how the following Hebrew word would cause the disorder of the M.T. in the present word.

in vain: their scheming ends in no advantage to themselves: the net result is—'nothing' (so the Hebrew).

21. am not I grieved: R.Vm. is nearer the Hebrew and otherwise preferable: 'do I not loathe.'

23 f. The Psalmist seems afraid that his maledictions are not quite in accord with the eternal way into which he prays to be led. But his prayer reveals a sincere desire to think and feel and say the thing that is right.

23. thoughts: not the Hebrew word so translated in verses 2, 17: the word used here means 'thoughts that go in different directions,' 'meditations,' 'deliberations,' 'plannings.' It is the

24 And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

140 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man;

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same word that occurs in Job iv. 13, xx. 21, only here the word has a letter inserted (*r*) which is inserted also in other Semitic words. The root idea is 'to divide.' In Ezek. xxxi. 5 the noun = 'branches': here it = 'branched thoughts.' See Matt. vi. 25, where 'be not anxious' = (*lit.*) 'be not distracted.'

24. We have here the conception of the two ways which meets us in many literatures. The soul at death has often been described as coming to a place whence two ways diverge, the one leading to bliss, the other to woe. The 'Choice of Hercules' recalls a legend in which two ways were placed before that Greek hero for his choice, the way of pleasure, and that of virtue. Christ speaks of the 'broad' and 'the narrow way,' and religion has been spoken of as 'a way': see Jer. xxi. 8. Cf. the twin paths of the *Didache*.

way of wickedness: *lit.* 'way of pain,' i. e. the way which leads to pain: see Jer. xxi. 8; so most moderns, including Dillmann (in class). The same Hebrew letters denote both 'idol' and 'pain.' The Targ. therefore renders 'the way of idolatry,' and the Pesh. 'the false way.'

the way everlasting: i. e. the way which leads to prolongation of life in the present world: cf. the contrast in i. 6.

According to the Targ. (so Olshausen, &c.) the sense is the 'way of old,' i. e. the good old way trodden by pious patriarchs, prophets, and saints of past days: see Jer. vi. 16, xviii. 15. Parallelism supports the former interpretation.

There is no reference here to the life beyond death; the word rendered 'everlasting' having always a relative meaning to be determined from the context: see on cxix. 44, cxxi. 8: see Introd., pp. 14 ff.

There is in this verse a mixture of figures. The 'painful way' is something *in a man* which leads him to choose that which issues in pain: the 'everlasting way' is one in which a man has to walk if he will have length of life.

Psalms CXL—CXLIII.

Most moderns, since Ewald's time, group these Psalms, referring them to the same period and making them voice the sufferings of faithful Jews due to the bitter and treacherous persecutions of the Syrian party, i. e. to the party that was made up of Syrian rulers in Palestine, and renegade Jews in league with them. These

Preserve me from the violent man:
Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; 2
Continually do they gather themselves together for war.
They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent; 3
Adders' poison is under their lips. [Selah

---

four Psalms lean much on other parts of the O.T., though there is also much in them that is original. They have many resemblances of vocabulary and style. It is an individual that speaks in them all, though the feelings he utters were shared by his fellows.

Psalm CXL.

Theme. Prayer for protection against malignant and treacherous foes.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer to be defended against violent and deceitful foes (verses 1–5).

(2) Prayer that the enemies' plans may come to nought (verses 6–9^a).

(3) Prayer for vengeance upon these enemies (verses 9^b–11).

(4) Confidence that Jehovah will stand by the righteous (verses 12 f.).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxl–cxliii.

See also Introd. to Ps. xciv (*Authorship and Date*).

1–5. *Prayer for protection.*

1. violent man: rather, 'violent men': Heb. 'men of violences': see on lxxviii. 51.

2. Which imagine: better, 'who devise.'

Continually: Heb. 'every day.'

do they gather themselves: we must (with Pesh., Targ., and most moderns) slightly change the Hebrew and read, 'they stir up much war.'

war: pl. of intensity, so = 'much war,' or 'bitter war.'

3. They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent: the figure is that of a sharpened sword or arrow (see lii. 2, lv. 21, lvii. 4, lix. 7, lxiv. 3). The serpent's tongue is naturally looked upon as inflicting the fatal bite: but see below.

Adders' poison, &c.: the poison of the serpent is not in the tongue, but in a bag below the tongue. These foes, by their slander, inflict the deadliest injury, but do it insidiously: see x. 7 (cf. Job xx. 12), lviii. 4: they are more treacherous than violent.

3^b is quoted from the LXX in Rom. iii. 13.

Adder: the Hebrew word occurs nowhere else in the O.T.,

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
Preserve me from the violent man:
Who have purposed to thrust aside my steps.
5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords;
They have spread a net by the way side;
They have set gins for me. [Selah

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God:
Give ear unto the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked;
Further not his evil device; *lest* they exalt themselves. [Selah

---

and is of uncertain meaning. The LXX explain as 'asp.' A word with the same consonants (the last two transposed) means 'spider.' Its parallelism with **serpent** makes the general sense clear enough.

5. Note the treachery so graphically depicted by the snares, cords, nets, and gins, and see ix. 16, xxxi. 4, xxxv. 7, cxix. 110, cxli. 9, cxliii. 3. In Matt. xxii. 15 ('how they might ensnare') the verb is cognate with the noun in the LXX represented by **snare** (*pagis*: Heb. *pakh*).

gins: traps for catching birds.

6-8. *Prayer for the defeat of the enemies' plans.*

6. I said: better, 'I say': see xvi. 1, xxxi. 14.

7. GOD: GOD and LORD in our A.R.V. represents an original *Yahweh* (Jehovah). For some centuries B.C. the last word was avoided by Jews as being too sacred to be used, and for it the Hebrew word for 'Lord' (*adonai*) was substituted. It is the vowels of this Hebrew word that we have in 'Jehovah,' which is, strictly speaking, no word at all. When, however, *Yahweh* and *Adonai* come together the former is represented by GOD in English and in the Hebrew vowels. 'GOD Lord' stands then for 'LORD Lord': see on cviii. 3 and cix. 21.

Thou hast covered: better, 'Thou coverest' (perf. of experience).

my head: as a helmet which protects the warrior: see lx. 7; Isa. lix. 17; Eph. vi. 17; 1 Thess. v. 8.

day of battle: Heb. 'day of armour,' i.e. the day when armour has to be used.

8. *lest* they exalt, &c.: the versions continue the force of the

As for the head of those that compass me about, 9
Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.
Let burning coals fall upon them: 10
Let them be cast into the fire;
Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.
An evil speaker shall not be established in the earth: 11

---

negative: 'let them not be exalted.' But for this the negative would have to be written a third time (it occurs twice). It is better, with most moderns, to attach the clause to the next verse, making the verb transitive by changing one vowel.

9. Render: (8) Let them not lift up their (9) head on every side of me; Let the mischief,' &c. Selah at the end of verse 8 may be ignored, since it is no part of the Psalm any more than the title.

head: Sym., Jero., Baethgen, &c. translate 'poison.' The Hebrew word for 'head' is spelt similarly, and not seldom identically.

those that compass me about: the Hebrew (one word) is probably an adverbial preposition, not a participle. It is impossible to be satisfied with any translation based upon the M. T. of verses 8 f.

10. Render: 'May He (Jehovah) rain burning coals on them: May He hurl them into miry pits (whence) they cannot arise.'

Let . . . fall: read, 'May He rain,' adding one consonant to the Hebrew verb. The subject is no doubt Jehovah: but it may be indefinite: 'May one rain.' There is probably a reference to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha: see Gen. xix.

deep pits: read 'pits of clay,' or 'of slime,' altering one consonant for another closely resembling it (*h* into *kh*), and thus connecting the Hebrew word etymologically with that rendered 'mire' in Job xxx. 19, and that translated 'slime' in Gen. x. 3. Perhaps the figure is suggested by the 'slime pits' mentioned in Gen. xiv. 10. 'Slime pits,' i. e. wells of bitumen or asphalt, abounded in Bible times in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea. There seems in this word another reminiscence of the catastrophe described in Gen. xix. Some render 'deep waters' (suggested by Arabic etymology): many read 'nets,' but 'rising in' or 'out of nets' makes a poor figure.

11. An evil speaker: *lit.* 'a man of tongue,' i. e. 'a slanderer,' as verse 4 shows. A Hebrew verb in what Ewald called 'the conjugation of attack' (*Angriffs-stamm*) is derived from the noun for 'tongue,' and means 'to attack with the tongue,' i. e. 'to slander.'

Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.
12 I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted,
And the right of the needy.
13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name:
The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

141 A Psalm of David.

1 Lord, I have called upon thee; make haste unto me:
Give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
2 Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;

---

hunt: the violent man who has hunted will be himself hunted by the evil he has done. He will be 'hoist with his own petard.'

12 f. *Confidence that Jehovah will support the faithful.*

13. Surely: the Hebrew word is used also in a restrictive sense as the Arabic *mā*, and it has that force here (=only): 'The righteous will give thanks,' &c., that is the only attitude they will take up: gratitude will be their one all-pervading emotion.

Psalm CXLI.

Theme. Prayer to be preserved from sin and from sinners.

I. *Contents.* (1) Prayer for Jehovah's help (verses 1 f.).
(2) Prayer to be kept from participating in the sin prevailing around (verses 3 f.).
(3) The reproof of a good man welcome (verse 5).
(4) The wickedness and destiny of the foe (verses 6 f.).
(5) Confident prayer to Jehovah for preservation (verses 7-10).
The text of parts of this Psalm is exceedingly corrupt, and the meaning consequently uncertain.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxl–cxliii.

1. I have called: better, 'I call.'

make haste: i. e. 'to help': see xxii. 20, &c.

my voice: LXX 'the voice of my supplication,' as in cxl. 6.

2. Render: 'My prayer is set in right order as incense before thee: The lifting up of my hands (in prayer) as the evening sacrifice.' The optative of the E.VV. is wholly unsuitable, though permitted by the Hebrew. The Psalmist protests that his prayer is as much in order, offered up with as much sincerity and propriety, as the evening oblation in the temple.

incense: here, as in lxv. 15, the reference is to the sweet-smelling savour which arose to God from sacrifices in general.

The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; 3
Keep the door of my lips.
Incline not my heart to any evil thing, 4
To be occupied in deeds of wickedness
With men that work iniquity:
And let me not eat of their dainties.
Let the righteous smite me, *it shall be* a kindness; 5
And let him reprove me, *it shall be as* oil upon the head;
Let not my head refuse it:
For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.

There is no allusion to the daily offering of incense on the table of incense (Exod. xxx. 7 f.).

The lifting up, &c.: i. e. in prayer: see Isa. i. 15, where the 'spreading forth of the hands' is parallel to 'making many prayers.'

evening sacrifice: D. Qimkhi inferred from these words that the present Psalm was made at the very outset to be sung as an evening hymn.

4. Incline: the Hebrew verb = 'to bend—this way or that.' The Psalmist wants to go straight on in the right way. With this prayer cf. 'lead us not into temptation,' i. e. 'leave me not lest my heart leans towards evil.'

let me not eat, &c.: he will neither share their luxuries nor unite with them in their corrupt deeds.

eat: see Prov. iv. 17, xxiv. 16. There may be an allusion to the Jewish laws of diet. A modern Jew, if strict, will eat only food that is *kasher* (i. e. pure according to Jewish law).

5. This verse is corrupt to a degree that makes emendation almost beyond hope: the following translation appears to the present writer to convey the intended sense better than any other with which he is acquainted: 'Let the righteous smite me with lovingkindness, and correct me; Oil (so choice) let not my head refuse: But my prayer is continually against their great wickedness.'

righteous: the word is employed sarcastically of the persecuting party: they claimed to have right on their side. The Psalmist will accept the rebuke and chastisement of these men: 'A jewel is a jewel in a swine's snout.' But what he prays against is the great wickedness (*lit.* 'wickednesses') of these men.

***as* oil upon the head:** see cxxxiii. 2 and Matt. vi. 17.

6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock;
And they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.
7 As when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth,
Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth.
8 For mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord:
In thee do I put my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

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6. Render: 'When their judges (or rulers) have been hurled by (or from) the sides of the rock, They will hear my words, that they are gracious.'

We appear to have in this verse a conditional sentence: the conditional particles are often omitted in Hebrew, though the second part of the sentence is properly introduced by the 'waw apodosis.'

thrown down . . . rock: a common form of punishment in ancient times: see 2 Chron. xxv. 12; Luke iv. 29. When these judges have been themselves judged and punished they will acknowledge how true and wholesome the Psalmist's words were.

7. Render: 'As when one cleaves and splits a rock' (this word has dropped out through its occurrence in verse 6) 'on the earth, Their bones shall be scattered at the entrance' (*lit.* 'mouth') 'of Sheol' (i. e. they shall be put to death). This verse continues the description of the fate of the godless oppressors. For **grave** the Hebrew has 'Sheol': see on lxxxvi. 13.

ploweth: the Hebrew verb (same root as Arabic *fellah*) means 'to cleave,' but never 'to plough,' though in Aramaic the word has the latter sense. We must insert after the verbs the word 'rock,' which has fallen out on account of its occurrence in verse 6. The splitting of rocks was known in the times of the ancient Greeks. Perhaps (so Kirkpatrick) we should understand 'wood.' The first verb is used in 2 Kings iv. 39 of slicing gourds, and the second in Eccles. x. 7 of cleaving wood.

our bones: read 'their bones': so Pesh. and (according to Baethgen) Lucian.

8–10. *Confident prayer for preservation.*

8. For: render, 'Surely.' The Hebrew *ki* has both senses.

mine eyes, &c.: see xxv. 15.

do I put my trust: Heb. 'do I take refuge': see ii. 12, vii. 1, lvii. 1, &c.

leave not, &c.: Heb. 'pour thou not out my life' (*lit.* 'my soul'), which is the proper rendering: see Gen. xxiv. 20. LXX 'take not away my soul.'

Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, 9
And from the gins of the workers of iniquity.
Let the wicked fall into their own nets, 10
Whilst that I withal escape.

Maschil of David, when he was in the cave; a Prayer. 142
I cry with my voice unto the LORD; 1

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9. See on cxl. 4 f.
10. their own: Heb. 'his own,' 'each into his own net.'

PSALM CXLII.

Theme. Cry for help against persecutors.

I. *Title.* What is the cave referred to in the title, and also in the very similar historical notice in the title of Ps. lvii? In our Hebrew and English Bibles two cave incidents in David's life are recorded, viz. that connected with the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1–5) when David fled from Saul, and that connected with the cave at En-gedi (1 Sam. xxiv) when David spared Saul's life. Modern scholarship has made it practically certain that the original Hebrew text had the 'fortress' (not cave) 'of Adullam' (see 1 Sam. xxii. 4 and 2 Sam. xxiii. 14): so Wellhausen, Budde, Nowack, H. P. Smith, &c. Unless the corruption of the text is older than the titles of this Psalm and of Ps. lvii the cave referred to can be that of En-gedi only. It is an interesting confirmation of the correctness of this textual emendation that most commentators, on quite other grounds, have decided that the cave of En-gedi is the one meant (see verse 8 and Introd. to Ps. lvii). Most readers will be a little shocked to be told that instead of the 'cave' one must in the future speak of the 'fortress of Adullam,' but accuracy seems to demand it.

II. *Contents.* (1) The complaint (verses 1–4).
(2) The prayer (verses 5–7).
The condition of the Psalmist is extreme. He is now apparently in prison or in prison-like misery (verse 8), and brought very low. But man's extremity is God's opportunity, as the author knew right well.

III. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks to Pss. cxl–cxliii.
The dependence of the Psalm on Ps. lxxvii and on Job xi. 20, and much in its style and contents, show that it is post-exilic. No scholar now defends its Davidic authorship.

With my voice unto the Lord do I make supplication.
2 I pour out my complaint before him;
I shew before him my trouble.
3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, thou knewest
my path.
In the way wherein I walk have they hidden a snare for me.
4 Look on *my* right hand, and see; for there is no man that
knoweth me:
Refuge hath failed me; no man careth for my soul.
5 I cried unto thee, O Lord;

1-4. *The complaint.*

1. Render: 'I cry aloud unto Jehovah; Loudly do I pray for favour.'

With my voice = 'aloud': see iii. 4.

The Psalmist calls attention not to the loudness of the prayer as such, but to the earnestness which the loudness implies.

2 f. Render these verses as follows: 2. 'I pour out my complaint before Him; I show before Him my distress' (*lit.* 'straitness,' see on cvii. 6), 3. 'When my spirit within me is exhausted. In the way in which I walk they hide for me a snare; but thou—thou knowest my path.'

3. overwhelmed: *lit.* 'covered,' so that breathing is difficult: then 'faint,' 'languishing.'

thou knewest: to be removed (with Wellhausen) to the end of the verse: see translation above.

4. Look, &c.: instead of the imperative we must with LXX, Pesh., Targ. read 'I look (looked) . . . see' (saw). No change in the consonants is necessary, since the Infinitive Absolute has often the meaning of the finite verb. The Psalmist looked right and left of him, but found no one to acknowledge him as his protégé (Ruth x. 10, 19). The imperative 'look' addressed to Jehovah is more strange than striking.

on *my* right hand: i. e. where the helper stood; see xvi. 8, cix. 6, 31, cx. 5, cxxi. 5 (but see on): but it is better (with Duhm, &c.) to restore 'and on my left hand,' an addition required by the sense. It had fallen out before the versions were made.

for: better, 'but.'

Refuge, &c.: based on Job xi. 20.

no man careth, &c.: see Jer. xxx. 17.

5-8. *The prayer.*

5. I cried: better, 'I cry.'

I said, Thou art my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: 6
Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger
than I.
Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto 7
thy name:
The righteous shall compass me about;
For thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

A Psalm of David. 143

Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my supplications: I

I said: better, 'I say': see cxl. 6.

my refuge: a different word from that so translated in verse 4. In the latter the prominent idea is that of *escape*, as such. The word in this verse means specially a place of *security* as such.

6. This verse is built up of borrowed words and phrases: see vii. I, xvii. I, xviii. 17, xxxi. 15, lxxix. 8.

7. prison: it is a *condition* of misery that is meant, and not a literal *place* of confinement: see cvii. 10 and Isa. xlii. 7, and see on cvii. 6: see, however, also cxliii. 3. It was the presence of this word in the Psalm that prompted the tradition preserved in the title.

The righteous shall compass, &c.: render: 'For the righteous will glorify (thee) when thou showest kindness to me.' The proper Hebrew for this is such as could be easily corrupted to the received text. No other emendation or rendering seems to the present writer equal to that proposed by himself above.

deal bountifully, &c.: see on cxvi. 7.

PSALM CXLIII.

Theme. Prayer for pardon, guidance and deliverance. This is the last of the 'penitential Psalms': see on Ps. cii (*Contents*).

I. *Title.* A David Psalm. The LXX adds to this: 'When his son persecuted him.' Of course Absalom is meant: but the accuracy of this account of the Psalm, though defended by Delitzsch, is too improbable to need refutation.

II. *Contents.* (1) Complaint. The Psalmist is in great distress: all the more because his trouble is due, in a measure, to his own sin (verses 1–6).

In thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness.
2 And enter not into judgement with thy servant;
For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.
3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul;
He hath smitten my life down to the ground:
He hath made me to dwell in dark places, as those that
have been long dead.
4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me;
My heart within me is desolate.

(2) Prayer for guidance and deliverance, and also for the destruction of his foes (verses 7–12).

III. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks to Pss. cxl–cxliii. In his last edition Ewald excluded the present Psalm from the group Pss. cxl–cxliii, though according it a similar date.

1–6. *The complaint.*

1. In this verse **righteousness** has obviously the sense of **faithfulness** which the word has in Isa. xl ff. Yet in the next verse the cognate verb keeps its original sense of being, or of being considered, just.

2. enter not, &c.: 'Do not let me be brought before thy court: I am sinful as all are, and I cannot stand the test of being judged by Thee.' God alone is just; see lxxi. 16.

thy servant: see on lxxxvi. 2.

be justified: the Hebrew verb is active: it = 'to stand acquitted.' The LXX, Jero. render by the passive as the E.VV.

3. For: introducing the ground of the earnest petition just presented: see verses 3 f.

dark places: reference is perhaps made here to prisons or dungeons: see on cxlii. 7. Probably, however, the word is to be understood metaphorically for a condition of great distress.

as those . . . long dead: i. e. like those long ago dead and now forgotten; see lxxxviii. 5. This is certainly the meaning, and not 'like people dead for ever, with no hope of resurrection,' though Delitzsch defends this latter view: see Jer. li. 39; Eccles. xii. 5.

4. overwhelmed, &c.: see on cxlii. 3.

My heart within me is simply a poet's way of saying 'I myself': see on cxix. 2. **my spirit . . . within me** has the same sense: 'I am faint,' 'languishing.'

desolate: the verb has here the sense which it has in Eccles. vii. 16, i.e. 'destroyed,' 'undone.'

I remember the days of old; 5
I meditate on all thy doings:
I muse on the work of thy hands.
I spread forth my hands unto thee: 6
My soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a weary land. [Selah
Make haste to answer me, O LORD; my spirit faileth: 7
Hide not thy face from me;
Lest I become like them that go down into the pit.
Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; 8
For in thee do I trust:
Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
For I lift up my soul unto thee.
Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: 9
I flee unto thee to hide me.

---

5 f. The remembrance of what God has done for him encourages him to pray for deliverance.

5. the days of old: see lxxvii. 5, 11.

doings: work: see lxxvii. 12.

6. I spread forth: see xliv. 20, lxxxviii. 9, cxli. 2; Isa. i. 15; Lam. i. 17; and see on cxli. 2.

thirsteth: the verb has dropped out of the Hebrew, but lxiii. 1, whence the present clause is taken, shows that we must restore 'thirsteth.'

as a weary land (longs for water). For **weary** read 'dry': the former word is a gloss in lxiii. 1, and must be omitted: so Baethgen and Duhm.

7–12. *Prayer for guidance, deliverance, and for vengeance upon his enemies.* This half of the Psalm is made up almost wholly of extracts from earlier Psalms, an important fact in determining the date of the Psalm.

7. See xxvii. 9, xxviii. 1, lxix. 17, lxxxiv. 2, cii. 2.

the pit: i.e. Sheol. 'To go down into the pit' means here 'to die.'

8. Cause me to hear: change one letter and read, 'satisfy me with,' as in xc. 14: so Kirkpatrick, Duhm.

in the morning: see xc. 14.

9. Deliver . . . enemies: as lix. 1; cf. xxxi. 15, cxlii. 6.

I flee, &c.: read, 'I take refuge in thee' or 'I flee to thee' (for safety): so the LXX and most moderns. Baethgen reads 'I wait on thee.' The M. T. means 'To thee I hide,' which is senseless, for the verb has no object after it.

10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God:
Thy spirit is good; lead me in the land of uprightness.
11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake:
In thy righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.
12 And in thy lovingkindness cut off mine enemies,
And destroy all them that afflict my soul;
For I am thy servant.

144 *A Psalm* of David.

1 Blessed be the LORD my rock,

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10. Teach me, &c.: see xxv. 4 f., xl. 8.

for thou, &c.: see xxxi. 14, xl. 6.

Thy spirit . . . uprightness: render: 'May thy good spirit lead me in a level' (or 'even') 'path,' i. e. in a path free from pitfalls into which one may fall, and from rough stones over which one may stumble.

land of uprightness: for 'land' read (with Hupfeld) 'path' (changing one consonant): the Hebrew for 'uprightness' means 'what is level,' 'even.'

11. Quicken me: see on cxix. 25.

for thy name's sake: see xxv. 11.

righteousness = 'faithfulness,' as in verse 1.

12. As regards such maledictions, see Introduction to cix, p. 216.

PSALM CXLIV.

Theme. See *Contents.*

I. *Contents.* This Psalm seems to be made up of three distinct parts which had originally no connexion with one another: but see on verses 9–11.

(1) A compilation of passages, mainly from Ps. xviii, in which Jehovah is praised for help in war (verses 1–4), and prayer is offered for further deliverance (verses 5–8).

(2) Prayer of the king to be protected from treacherous barbarians (verses 9–11).

(3) A fragment of some lost Psalm describing the happiness of the people who worship Jehovah (verses 12–15).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See under *Contents.* The use made of other Psalms, the strong Aramaic colouring, and other things, point to a date considerably later than the Exile for each of the three sections of the Psalm.

When citations are made in this Psalm from other Psalms, the notes on the passages cited should be consulted.

1–4. *Praise to Jehovah for help in war.*

Which teacheth my hands to war,
And my fingers to fight:
My lovingkindness, and my fortress, 2
My high tower, and my deliverer;
My shield, and he in whom I trust;
Who subdueth my people under me.
Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? 3
Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?
Man is like to vanity: 4
His days are as a shadow that passeth away.
Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: 5
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
Cast forth lightning, and scatter them; 6

---

1. From xviii. 46, 34.

Blessed: same meaning virtually as 'praised': see on cxviii. 26. In verse 15 the other Hebrew word generally translated 'blessed' is rightly rendered 'happy'; see on lxxxiv. 4.

my rock: see on lxxv. 5 and xcv. 1.

fingers: referring perhaps to the use of the bow. It is often, however, as here in parallelism with **hands,** and then with no difference of meaning.

2. From xviii. 2, 47.

For the various figures used to set forth Jehovah's manifold helpfulness see on xviii. 2 (vol. i). God is not here described as a Rock as in xviii. 2: perhaps for the same reason which led the LXX translators to render the word by God, i. e. to avoid any apparent encouragement of idol worship; see on lxxv. 5, xcv. 1.

3 f. *Man's insignificance.* He is wholly undeserving of the favour shown him by Jehovah.

3. From viii. 4; see 2 Sam. vii. 18.

man: see on xc. 3 and ciii. 15.

son of man: i. e. 'human being' (= Latin *homo* and Greek *anthrōpos*). See for 'son' on lxxix. 11.

4. 4^a is a variation of xxxix. 5, 11, or of lxii. 9; 4^b is a variation of Job xiv. 2; see cii. 11, cix. 23; Job viii. 9.

5-8. *A prayer for further deliverance by the manifestation of Jehovah's majesty.*

5. 5^a from xviii. 9^a, 5^b from civ. 32^b, but description is changed into entreaty.

6. From xviii. 14: cf. 2 Sam. xxii. 15.

them: i. e. the enemies, though they are not named.

Send out thine arrows, and discomfit them.
7 Stretch forth thine hand from above;
Rescue me, and deliver me out of great waters,
Out of the hand of strangers;
8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.
9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God:
Upon a psaltery of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.
10 It is he that giveth salvation unto kings:
Who rescueth David his servant from the hurtful sword.
11 Rescue me, and deliver me out of the hand of strangers,

---

7. From xviii. 16, description being again changed into entreaty.

Rescue: another verb with this general sense; see on lxxiv. 2. The Hebrew word here occurs in this Psalm only, viz. verses 7, 10, and 11, but it is common in Aramaic. Its etymological sense is 'to cut off,' then 'to loosen,' 'set free.'

8. right hand: i. e. 'oath': among the Semites an oath was made by elevating the right hand (pointing to deity). **Their right hand,** &c. means 'their oath is a false oath.'

9–11. *A king's prayer for deliverance from treacherous foes.* The connexion with the foregoing is loose, though the allusion to false oaths in both parts (see verses 8 and 11) forms a link between them, and suggests common authorship.

9. From xxxiii. 2 f.

God: the only other examples of *Elohim* (God) occurring alone as a Divine name in Books IV and V (Pss. xc–cl) are in Ps. cviii (see on), which is compiled out of two Elohistic Psalms, and in cxlv. 1. Perhaps in the latter and in the present verse we should read 'Jehovah' (*Yahweh*).

a psaltery of ten strings: render: 'a ten-stringed harp,' see Introduction, pp. 27 f.

10. 10^a from xviii. 50^a.

Who rescueth: see on verse 7.

David: an instance of the use of David in the general sense 'king.' Cf. 'Kaiser' (German), 'Czar' (Russian) from 'Caesar.' According to Stade the Messiah is meant: see Ezek. xxxiv. 23 f.; Hos. iii. 5.

his servant: not in the original passage: rhythm requires its omission here.

11. Rescue: see on verse 7.

Whose mouth speaketh vanity,
And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

When our sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth ; 12
And our daughters as corner stones hewn after the fashion
of a palace ;
When our garners are full, affording all manner of store ; 13

---

hand: Duhm thinks the reference is to the right hand by which oaths are made ; see on verse 8. So he would paraphrase : 'Rescue me from the false oath,' i. e. the treachery of (these) foreigners. See the closing line of the verse.

strangers: Heb. 'foreigners.'

their right hand, &c. : see on 8^b.

12–15. *The happy lot of Jehovah's people.* This is a mere fragment from a poem which is otherwise lost. This specimen is so charming that one cannot but regret the loss of the rest of the song. Verse 12 begins with a relative pronoun which is quite unintelligible, as the noun to which it refers was in the part which is missing. It seems a waste of time and a misuse of ingenuity to try and explain this relative as if it referred to something in the earlier verses of the existing Psalm.

12. plants: better, 'saplings' : what has been newly planted, and sends forth shoots. The same thought is intended as in cxxviii. 3, 'young olive trees.' Baethgen refers to Verg. *Aen.* ix. 674.

grown up: referring to the plants fully grown, though young.

in their youth: referring to the sons.

corner stones: Duhm says that we must here understand those pillars which, in Greek architecture, were carved as female figures—the 'Caryatides.' It is, perhaps, a proper objection that Greek art would be scarcely used to embellish Hebrew poetry, but at a late time Hebrew writers were considerably influenced by Greek thought (cf. the 'Wisdom literature'). Delitzsch, Kay, &c. think that we are to understand here the cornices which were found, and are still to be seen, in the angles of Eastern rooms, elaborately carved and gorgeously coloured.

13. The home is not only to be full of flourishing children, but there is to be an abundance of food for all.

all manner of store: *lit.* 'from kind to kind,' i. e. 'every kind' (of provision). The word here rendered 'kind' is of Persian origin (so Nöldeke), and occurs in 2 Chron. xvi. 14, and in Sir. (Heb.) xxxviii. 28. It answers to the Heb. *mīn.*

And our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands
in our fields;
14 *When* our oxen are well laden;
When there is no breaking in, and no going forth,
And no outcry in our streets;
15 Happy is the people, that is in such a case:
Yea, happy is the people, whose God is the LORD.

145 *A Psalm of* praise; of David.
1 I will extol thee, my God, O King;

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in our fields: the Hebrew word means what is outside (the house), and is used of streets (as distinct from open spaces, see verse 14) and also as here of fields.

14. Render: '(When there is) no breach (in the walls) and no one going forth (as a prisoner), And there is no cry (of distress) in our open spaces.'

***When* our oxen are well laden:** the Hebrew so rendered is incapable of rational translation, and it must be regarded as a mere dittograph, through a copyist's mistake, of the Hebrew words in verse 13 translated (our sheep) **bring forth thousands and ten thousands:** the resemblance in the Hebrew is close.

The Hebrew word rendered **oxen** means 'chieftains,' though a mere change of vowels is needed to obtain the word for 'oxen.' But the abundance of provisions implied in well-laden oxen has been already mentioned (verse 13). Some, however, understand 'oxen capable of carrying burden,' a sense permitted by the passive participle found here: see on xcvi. 4 and cxi. 2. So Targ., Qimkhi, &c.

no breaking in: no invading foe will make a breach in the wall (Neh. vi. 7).

no going forth: as a prisoner taken by a foreign foe: see 2 Kings xxiv. 12; Amos iv. 3. The Hebrew has a fem. participle used as neuter impersonally, *lit.* 'nothing going out.'

no outcry: i. e. no cry of distress by the defeated citizens: see Jer. xiv. 2.

streets: the Hebrew word means broad, open spaces like our squares: this is where the people would gather, and a panic might drive them to yell and howl in their distress. See on verse 13 (**fields**).

15. In this verse the blessings enumerated in verses 12-14 are summed up: 15^b is from xxxiii. 12.

Happy: see on lxxxiv. 4.

PSALMS CXLV—CL.

These 'Hallel' or 'Praise Psalms' owe their origin probably

And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
Every day will I bless thee; 2
And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; 3
And his greatness is unsearchable.

---

to liturgical needs, i. e. they were made to be sung in the temple. Pss. cxlvi–cl all begin and end with the formula 'Praise ye Yah,' i. e. 'Hallelujah.' Ps. cxlv has in its title the word *tehillah* = 'praise.' These six Psalms cxlv–cl are closely united in subject-matter, language, and in poetical form, and they are probably products of the same age, perhaps of the revived interest in worship which followed the dedication of the temple after its desecration by the Syrian army. An older date has been argued from the fact that the recently discovered Hebrew fragment of Sir. seems to imply the prior existence of Ps. cxlvii f.: this would give a date at least twenty years before the time of the Maccabees. But in the common phrases and even paragraphs found in different writings it is always difficult to decide which is original. Ps. cxlix is almost certainly Maccabean, and this carries with it a Maccabean date for the remaining five Psalms of the group.

Psalm CXLV.

Theme. A hymn in praise of Jehovah's bountifulness and compassion.

I. *Contents.* It is an alphabetical Psalm, the last of them, and as in the case of such Psalms generally, the connexion of thought is loose, and does not lend itself readily to logical analysis: the parts are bound by that which is external—the letters of the alphabet—and not much by the thought.

We have here a beautiful song of praise: a bracelet in which one beautiful bead is strung on after another, making a yet more beautiful whole. It is an alphabetic Psalm, but the *nun* strophe has been lost (so Grotius, Ewald, &c.). The LXX (so Vulg.) supplies such a strophe (see under verse 13), but its genuineness is denied by nearly all modern scholars.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See General Introduction to Pss. cxlv–cl.

Baethgen thinks verse 13 excludes a Maccabean date.

1. (*ālēph*). **my God, O King:** observe the note of universalism: not Jehovah, nor King of Israel; cf. verse 9 (**all**): but see on cxliv. 9.

for ever and ever: see on cxix. 44.

2. (*bēth*).

3. (*gīmĕl*). 3^a from xlviii. 2.

4 One generation shall laud thy works to another,
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
5 Of the glorious majesty of thine honour,
And of thy wondrous works, will I meditate.
6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts;
And I will declare thy greatness.
7 They shall utter the memory of thy great goodness,
And shall sing of thy righteousness.
8 The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion;
Slow to anger, and of great mercy.
9 The Lord is good to all;

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4. (*dālēth*). See xix. 3.

5. (*hē*). **Of the glorious majesty of thine honour:** Heb. 'Of the majesty of the glory of thy honour': in Pesh. and one other ancient authority the word 'glory' is omitted. This would relieve the sentence and help the rhythm: render, 'Of the majesty of thy honour,' so Baethgen.

of thy wondrous works: *lit.* 'words' or 'things of,' &c. i. e. 'instances of thy wondrous works,' see on cv. 28. The LXX and Pesh. make a verb of the Hebrew word denoting 'words,' 'things,' rendering the verse thus: 'They will speak of the glorious majesty of thy holiness, and tell of thy wonders.'

6. (*wāw*). **the might of thy terrible acts:** referring to Jehovah's judgements upon the heathen.

I will declare: we must certainly read 'they shall declare,' as the context shows. So the Targ. and some MSS. of the LXX.

thy greatness: render (with *keth.*, Aq., Jero.), 'thy great deeds': cf. (the parallel) **thy terrible acts.**

7. (*zain*). **utter:** *lit.* 'make to bubble' (like a spring): the same Hebrew word in xix. 2 and cxix. 171.

of thy great goodness: read (changing one vowel), 'of the greatness of thy goodness.'

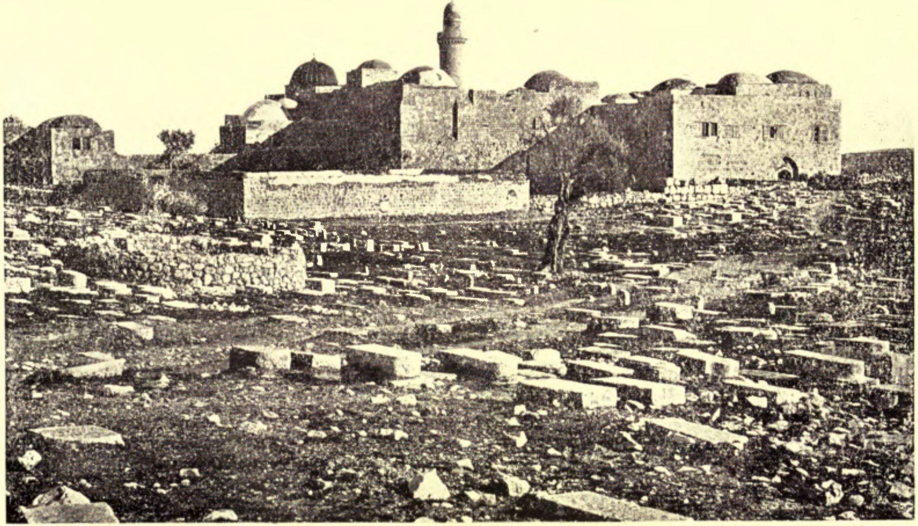
sing: Heb. 'sing with a loud, piercing voice.' The verb is used especially of the ringing shouts of victorious armies.

righteousness: i. e. faithfulness, as in Isa. xl ff.

8. (*khēth*). Taken from Exod. xxxiv. 6 with trivial change. See lxxxvi. 13, ciii. 8.

of great mercy: Heb. 'great in lovingkindness.'

9. (*ṭēth*). **good to all:** read, 'good to all those who wait (upon Him).' The LXX has the additional words, but not the word for 'all.'



Tomb of David

And his tender mercies are over all his works.
All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O Lord; 10
And thy saints shall bless thee.
They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, 11
And talk of thy power;
To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, 12
And the glory of the majesty of his kingdom.
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, 13
And thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.
The Lord upholdeth all that fall, 14
And raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

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tender mercies: Heb. 'compassions.'

10. (*yōdh*). **thy saints:** better, 'thy favoured ones': see vol. i, Note B, pp. 360 f.

11 ff. repeat the thoughts of verses 4–6.

11. (*kaph*). **thy power:** in Hebrew the sing. of the word rendered **thy mighty acts** in verse 4: in verse 11 the sing. occurs as here.

12. (*lāmĕdh*). **his mighty acts . . . his kingdom:** the sudden transition from the second person to the third is strange, though in poetry far from unexampled: see pp. 175, 236. Perhaps it is due to the carelessness of the compiler. The LXX keeps up the continuity of the second person, reading 'thy' for 'his.' The Hebrew has the second person from verse 13 to the end of verse 16: then the third person is used to the end of the Psalm as it is in verse 3.

13. (*mēm*). This verse occurs also in Dan. iii. 33 and iv. 31. The present is the original passage, though Hitzig maintains the contrary.

The ***nūn*** strophe ought to come in here, and it is highly probable that it did exist in the original form of the Psalm.

In the LXX and in the Vulg., which in the Psalms always follows it, a ***nūn*** strophe is supplied as follows: 'Faithful (Heb. *ne^{e}mān*) is Jehovah in all his words, and holy in all his works.' This strophe is not found in the other versions, and it is generally regarded as an attempt at supplying the place of a lost verse. Duhm, however, accepts it as genuine. The subject cannot be discussed here.

14. (*sāmek*). **raiseth up:** the Hebrew word occurs nowhere in the O. T. except here and in cxlvi. 8. It is common in Aramaic.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee;
And thou givest them their meat in due season.
16 Thou openest thine hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways,
And gracious in all his works.
18 The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
To all that call upon him in truth.
19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him;
He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
20 The Lord preserveth all them that love him;
But all the wicked will he destroy.
21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord;
And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

146 Praise ye the Lord.

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15. (*'ain*). God is pictured as a householder supplying the needs of all. So civ. 27 on which the verse is based.

16. (*pê*). **satisfiest the desire,** &c.: render: '(Thou) satisfiest every living thing with (what thy) good will (supplies).' The word rendered 'desire' corresponds with good (i. e. good things) in civ. 28: it means the feeling in God of being well pleased: His favour: then by metonymy of effect for cause what His favour supplies. The word has often this objective sense in Proverbs.

17. (*tsādhe*). **righteous:** i. e. 'faithful,' as the parallelism proves.

ways: see on ciii. 7.

18. (*qōph*). **nigh:** i. e. to help: see xxxiv. 18, cxix. 151; Deut. iv. 7.

in truth: see Isa. x. 20; John xiv. 23 f.

19. (*rēsh*). **desire:** here the word has its subjective meaning: the feeling of desire as such.

their cry: Heb. 'their cry for help.'

20. (*shīn*). See on cxix. 161–168 (**shin**).

21. (*tāw*). **for ever and ever:** an interpolation from verse 2. The measure of the verse requires its omission.

Psalms CXLVI—CL.

For general remarks regarding these Hallelujah Psalms see on Pss. cxlv–cl. They begin and end with 'Hallelujah,' though the

Praise the Lord, O my soul.
While I live will I praise the Lord : 2
I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.
Put not your trust in princes, 3
Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; 4
In that very day his thoughts perish.
Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, 5

'Hallelujah' which closes these Psalms is almost certainly a copyist's addition due to dittography.

Psalm CXLVI.

Theme. Jehovah alone the unfailing Deliverer.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah alone to be trusted : men may fail (verses 1-4).

(2) Jehovah Creator, Judge, Deliverer and King (verses 5-10).

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on cxlv-cl.

1-4. *Jehovah alone to be trusted.*

1 f. Compare with the Psalmist's summons to himself to worship Jehovah in ciii. 1, civ. 1, on which these two verses are based.

Though these Psalms are primarily congregational the individual note breaks out often as here.

2. Like civ. 33 with slight changes.

3 f. *Warning against trusting in men.* In verse 5 f. the positive side of the truth is stated and enforced.

3. Based on cxviii. 8 f. Faithless heathen rulers are meant, Syrian, or perhaps Persian.

son of man : i. e. man : see on lxxxix. 25.

help : the Hebrew word is usually rendered 'salvation' : it means 'a state of being set at large,' and is cognate with the proper names 'Joshua,' 'Jesus' : see on lxxiv. 2, and on cvii. 6.

4. See civ. 29; Isa. ii. 22. The verse occurs in 1 Macc. ii. 63^{b}, only that in the latter **His breath goeth forth** and **In that very day** are absent. Bickell and Duhm omit them here on metrical grounds, finding support in the Apocrypha passage.

thoughts : an Aramaic word meaning also 'purposes.' It occurs nowhere else in the O. T., though it is found in the Hebrew text of Sir. iii. 24. The verb occurs in Dan. vi. 4 ('to think'), and a cognate noun in Job xii. 5 ('thought').

5-10. *Jehovah's favour displayed in manifold ways.*

5. See xx. 1, xxxiii. 13, cxliv. 15.

Happy : translated 'Blessed' in i. 1, &c. : see on lxxxiv. 4.

Whose hope is in the Lord his God:
6 Which made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that in them is;
Which keepeth truth for ever:
7 Which executeth judgement for the oppressed;
Which giveth food to the hungry:
The Lord looseth the prisoners;
8 The Lord openeth *the eyes of* the blind;
The Lord raiseth up them that are bowed down;
The Lord loveth the righteous;
9 The Lord preserveth the strangers;
He upholdeth the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

The Hebrew word occurs twenty-five times in the Psalter, but this is its last occurrence.

hope: an Aramaic word found besides only in cxix. 116.

6. *Jehovah's power in contrast with man's weakness* (see verse 4). **in them**: i. e. in heaven, earth, and sea.

7. 7^{a} is from ciii. 6. With 7^{b} cf. cvii. 9.

8. 8^{a} is identical with cxlv. 14^{b}.

The LORD (i. e. Jehovah) stands at the head of five successive lines in Hebrew as in English: probably to make it very clear that He and no other does the things ascribed to Him.

openeth . . . the blind: the word **eyes** has evidently slipped out of the Hebrew, and must be restored. 'To open the blind' is no more Hebrew idiom than English. Blindness is used to convey the notion of general helplessness: see Deut. xxviii. 29; Job xii. 25, xxix. 18, xxxv. 5, &c.

9. strangers: Heb. (sing.) *ger*, translated 'sojourner' in cxix. 19 (see on). The Hebrew word never means in the O.T. 'proselyte,' by which the LXX here and usually renders it, though in later parts of the O.T. the term has, in addition to its civil, a religious signification: but the *ger* still needs protection (cf. **fatherless and widow**).

fatherless: strictly 'orphans': see on lxxxii. 3.

the way . . . he turneth upside down: the verb means 'to make crooked': the sense is 'God causes the wicked to reach a goal which they have not in view: they seek happiness, but the way they walk in is made, by Divine overruling, to issue in misery.'

The LORD shall reign for ever, 10
Thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.
Praise ye the LORD.

Praise ye the LORD; 147
For it is good to sing praises unto our God;
For it is pleasant, *and* praise is comely.
The LORD doth build up Jerusalem; 2

---

10. 10^a = Exod. xv. 18^a.
Praise ye the LORD (Yah): omitted in LXX, Pesh.

PSALM CXLVII.

Theme. Jehovah's love and power displayed in nature.

I. *Contents.* (1) Jehovah's love to Israel shown in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and in the restoration of her exiled inhabitants (verses 1–3).

(2) Jehovah's power displayed in nature and in His treatment of men according to their deserts (verses 4–11).

(3) The people of Jerusalem urged to praise Jehovah for what He has done on their behalf (verses 12–14).

(4) Jehovah's gracious doings in nature a pledge of His faithfulness to Israel (verses 15–20).

A rigid analysis of the Psalm is rendered impossible by its liturgical origin and character.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxlv–cl at p. 350.

The LXX and dependent versions divide this Psalm into two, reckoning verses 1–11 as Ps. cxlvi: see Introd. p. 6.

1–3 *Jehovah's goodness to Jerusalem.*

1. Praise ye, &c.: inserted, by mistake, in verse 1 instead of in the title; see 'Hallelujah Psalms,' p. 226 f. The misplacement of this liturgical formula arose through the mistaken insertion of the Hebrew particle (*ki*) rendered **For**, which has come into the first line from the second by dittography, and which is not represented in the Pesh. The verse itself should then be translated: 'It is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, (and) praise is comely.' We then reduce the three lines of verse 1 to two (distich), corresponding to every verse in the Psalm except verse 8; the liturgical summons taking its proper place in the title and not in the Psalm itself. If the Hebrew word *ki* is retained it must be rendered 'Surely,' not **For**.

He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
3 He healeth the broken in heart,
And bindeth up their wounds.
4 He telleth the number of the stars;
He giveth them all their names.
5 Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;
His understanding is infinite.
6 The LORD upholdeth the meek:
He bringeth the wicked down to the ground.
7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving;
Sing praises upon the harp unto our God:

---

2. 2^b is from Isa. lvi. 8 with one trivial change.

3. Based on Isa. lxi. 1: cf. Hos. vi. 1 and Ps. cxxxvii.

4–11. *Jehovah's power manifested in nature and among men.*

4 f. Based on Isa. xl. 26, 28.

4. He telleth the number, &c.: i. e. He reckons up the number of the stars, a task beyond man's power (Gen. xv. 15): He knows how many there are: or, He assigns a number to the stars; determines how many of them are to be: so Hengstenberg, Ewald, Hitzig, Hupfeld. The Hebrew and the parallelism support this last interpretation.

He giveth them all their names: better, 'He calls all of them by (their) names,' i. e. He calls them up to appear before Him to report themselves, just as soldiers have to answer when the muster roll is called: see Isa. xl. 26.

5. mighty in power: Heb. 'abundant in power': see Isa. xl. 26.

infinite: Heb. 'innumerable.' But this cannot be said of Jehovah's understanding, as our English translators saw. We must read 'unsearchable,' from the parallel passage in Isa. xl. 28. The word 'number' got into verse 5 from verse 4 by dittography: 'there is no searching' (= unsearchable), becoming 'there is no number' = 'without number' ('innumerable').

6. God's love and power are manifested not only in inanimate nature, but in His treatment of men.

upholdeth: the same word in cxlvi. 9.

7. Duhm thinks that with the new summons to praise God in this verse we have the opening of a new Psalm.

harp: better, 'lyre': see Introd. p. 28.

Who covereth the heaven with clouds, 8
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
He giveth to the beast his food, 9
And to the young ravens which cry.
He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: 10
He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.
The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, 11
In those that hope in his mercy.
Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; 12
Praise thy God, O Zion.

---

8. See civ. 13 f. This verse is the only tristich in the Psalm when we have removed 'Praise-ye-Yah' outside from verse 1 to the title. The LXX add to verse 8 from civ. 14 'and grass for the service of men.'

Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains: Kay renders, 'Who makes the mountains to shoot forth grass,' which the Hebrew allows but does not necessitate.

upon the mountains: i. e. beyond the reach of man's care and cultivation. Kay gives illustrations of this thought from several writers.

9. See cxlv. 15; Job xxxviii. 41; Luke xii. 24.

young ravens: the Hebrew means simply 'ravens': *lit.* 'sons of the raven.' But 'sons' (usually rendered 'children') 'of Israel' do not mean the youthful portion of the nation: see on cvii. 8.

cry: according to the LXX 'who call upon God.' Their cry is a prayer. It is probably, however, only the cry as such of the raven that is meant. According to Kay the thought is—'though the raven sends up such a harsh scream God does not disregard it'; a very fanciful conjecture.

10 f. follow xxxiii. 16-18 (see on). Jehovah takes pleasure in what is morally excellent, not in physical strength or agility.

10. horse: the war-horse is meant: see Job xxxix. 19-25.

legs of a man: cf. Homer's epithet for Achilles, 'swift.' In ancient warfare, much more than now, swift-footedness was extremely necessary in a warrior, as well as strength.

11. mercy: better, 'lovingkindness.'

12-14. *Jehovah's goodness to Jerusalem.*

12. With verse 12 the LXX, Jero., Pesh., and probably Aq., Theod., Sym., began a new Psalm: so also Duhm and Cheyne (2), though the latter does not, like the former, make two independent

13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates;
He hath blessed thy children within thee.
14 He maketh peace in thy borders;
He filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.
15 He sendeth out his commandment upon earth;
His word runneth very swiftly.
16 He giveth snow like wool;
He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.
17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels:
Who can stand before his cold?

Psalms of verses 1–11. For the Psalm which opens with this verse the LXX has the title: 'Hallelujah' (a Psalm of) Haggai and Zechariah.'

Praise the LORD: the Hebrew verb here is not that found in 'Hallelujah,' but a verb of the same sense commonly used in Aramaic.

13. the bars, &c.: Delitzsch, Kay, and others refer to Neh. iii. 3, 6, 13 f., 15.

14. 14^{a} is an imitation of Isa. lx. 17: see lxxxi. 16; Deut. xxxii. 14.

He maketh peace, &c.: Heb. 'Who makes thy boundary (to be) in a state of peace': the construction is the same as that in cxx. 6 (see on).

thy borders: the Hebrew noun is sing., and means first what bounds, then, by metonymy, of contained for containing, it came to mean 'bounded land,' 'territory.'

finest of the wheat: Heb. (as RVm.) 'fat of the wheat.'

15–20. *Nature's confirmation of Jehovah's faithfulness.*

15 f. are influenced by Isa. lv. 10 f.

15. God's word is personified as in cvii. 20. In later Judaism (Targums, &c.) 'Word of God' came to be a name of God; primarily a substitute for the Divine name to avoid anthropomorphisms.

16. snow. During the author's tour in Palestine (Dec. 1888) he was detained in Jerusalem three days beyond the contemplated time, because the snow storms were so vehement, and the roads to Jaffa quite blocked by snowdrifts.

17. (ice) like morsels: or 'like crumbs.' The hail, which is meant, was like crumbs of bread.

Who can stand, &c. The question seems to Derenbourg and Duhm absurd, but many even in Palestine have been known to

He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: 18
He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.
He sheweth his word unto Jacob, 19
His statutes and his judgements unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation: 20
And as for his judgements, they have not known them.
Praise ye the LORD.

Praise ye the LORD. 14
Praise ye the LORD from the heavens:
Praise him in the heights.
Praise ye him, all his angels: 2
Praise ye him, all his host.

---

die of cold: see on verse 16. Derenbourg reads, 'Before his cold the water stands frozen,' and Duhm prefers this to the M. T.

18. See Deut. iv. 7 f.

his word: the word which causes snow, ice, and hail makes these melt in due season.

19 f. The word of Jehovah, operative on nature, provides also a revelation for the chosen people.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Theme. Let heaven and earth praise Jehovah.

I. *Contents.* (1) Let all in heaven praise Jehovah (verses 1-6). (2) Let all that is on earth praise Him (verses 7-14).

A beautiful and bold Psalm, full of striking personifications and apostrophizations.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxlv-cl. This Psalm is the most general in the group. There is nothing national in it except in the last verse. It is a universal song of praise.

1-6. *Let all that is in heaven praise Jehovah.*

1. Praise: the verb in 'Hallelujah.'

from the heavens: cf. verse 7, 'from the earth.' Heaven and earth are the two centres of the universe, and the praises of Jehovah are to ring out from both.

in the heights: i. e. of heaven (Job xvi. 19, xxv. 2).

2. host: read 'hosts' (pl.) with the ancient versions and the Massorites (*qr.*), and as required by the parallelism (**angels**): see ciii. 21, on which the present passage is modelled. The sense of

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon:
Praise him, all ye stars of light.
4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
And ye waters that be above the heavens.
5 Let them praise the name of the LORD:
For he commanded, and they were created.
6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever:
He hath made a decree which shall not pass away.
7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
Ye dragons, and all deeps:

'hosts' is explained by **angels**: heavenly bodies are referred to in verse 3: see 1 Kings xxii. 19; Neh. ix. 4. Olsh., &c. (so *keth.*) prefer the sing. **host.**

3. stars of light: i. e. 'stars that carry the light,' 'luminaries' (Gen. i. 14). The LXX, Pesh., Targ. read 'stars and light.'

4. heavens of heavens: i. e. 'the loftiest heaven,' the Hebrew superlative: cf. 'King of Kings,' &c. The idea of a plurality of heavens seems implied, either three (see 2 Chron. xii. 12) or seven (so the Talmud).

waters that be above the heavens: see *Hebrew Cosmology*, p. 174 f.

5. Between the two lines of this verse the LXX, Pesh., Targ. insert the words 'For He spake and they were made': so PBV. The addition is taken from xxxiii. 9, and is not genuine.

6. stablished: He supports as well as creates the universe: see Sir. xliii. 16; Col. i. 17.

He hath made a decree, &c.: this rendering follows the LXX and Jero. The following more correctly reproduces the Hebrew, Pesh., and Targ.: 'He has given them a statute and' (= 'which') 'they cannot transgress,' i. e. the heavens, &c. can do no other than obey the Divine behest. The subject of the latter verb ('transgress') is in Hebrew indefinite. For **decree** see Introd. to Ps. cxix, p. 254.

7-13. *Let all that is in earth praise Jehovah.*

7. dragons: *lit.* 'extended creatures.' The monsters of the deep are obviously meant, but the word in the singular is employed for the primaeval monster of ancient Semitic mythology: see on lxxiv. 13 f.

Baethgen adopts the very improbable hypothesis that water spirits are meant: see W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 161.

Fire and hail, snow and vapour; 8
Stormy wind, fulfilling his word:
Mountains and all hills; 9
Fruitful trees and all cedars:
Beasts and all cattle; 10
Creeping things and flying fowl:
Kings of the earth and all peoples; 11
Princes and all judges of the earth:
Both young men and maidens; 12
Old men and children:
Let them praise the name of the LORD; 13
For his name alone is exalted:
His glory is above the earth and heaven.
And he hath lifted up the horn of his people, 14
The praise of all his saints;

---

8. Fire: i. e. lightning.

vapour: i. e. mists. LXX, Pesh., Jero. read 'ice.'

9. See civ. 16.

10. Various kinds of animals: based on Gen. i. 24 f.

Beasts: 'Wild animals.'

cattle: 'tame animals.'

11 f. Classes of men enumerated. Man is named last because he is the crown of creation: see Gen. i. 26.

The Psalmist arranges human beings according to station (verse 11), sex and age (verse 12).

13 f. According to Duhm these verses were originally a marginal gloss, as they appear to disturb the symmetry of the Psalm.

13. is exalted: see Isa. xii. 4.

His glory: better, 'His majesty': see viii. 1, civ. 1, cxlv. 3; Hab. iii. 3.

above the earth and heaven: referring to the two parts of the Psalm.

14. This verse is cited in Sir. li. 12: but one cannot be certain that the Psalm is older than that book (say B. C. 180), as there may be an older writer from whom both quoted.

And he hath lifted up, &c.: LXX (not Jero. as Baethgen wrongly says) read the fut., 'And he will lift up,' &c. All the other ancient versions agree with the M. T. and the R. V. Concerning the lifting up of the horn see note on lxxv. 4.

praise: i. e. the object of praise.

Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him.
Praise ye the LORD.

149 Praise ye the LORD.
Sing unto the LORD a new song,
And his praise in the assembly of the saints.
2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him :

---

a people near unto him: far better read with Riehm. (Hupfeld) and Duhm, 'a people acceptable to Him.' The M. T., though followed by the ancient versions, makes very poor sense.

PSALM CXLIX.

Theme. Israel's song of triumph.

I. *Contents.* (1) Israel summoned to praise God for His deliverance (verses 1–5).

(2) Joy of the righteous in their victory, and a resolve to destroy the foe (verses 6–9).

The spirit of the Psalm is vindictive in a high degree, reminding one more of the Book of Esther than of the sermon on the mount.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See remarks on Pss. cxlv–cl. The Psalm has been largely accepted as Maccabean. The ardour, courage and consciousness of strength which it breathes are eminently suitable to that age.

1–5. *Israel summoned to praise Jehovah for the deliverance He has granted.* The Psalm seems to have been inspired by some great event which brought the nation very much gladness: whether or not that was the deliverance from Babylon, the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, or some victory over the Syrians we can never finally decide unless some fresh decisive facts are brought to light.

1. Praise ye, &c. belongs to the title.

new song: a new blessing calls forth a new song : see xxxiii. 3, xcvi. 1.

2. assembly of the saints: render, 'the assembly' or 'congregation of the favoured ones' : the same expression occurs in 1 Macc. ii. 42 : in the LXX, for the Hebrew word rendered **saints** we have *Asidaioi*, a name given in the Maccabean and later days to the Jews that were loyal to the law and zealous for its observance.

him (that made him): in Hebrew may be plural, and is generally so construed : 'them (that made him)' must be then explained as plural of majesty, as *Elohim* : see on lxxvi. 4. But

Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
Let them praise his name in the dance: 3
Let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.
For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: 4
He will beautify the meek with salvation.
Let the saints exult in glory: 5
Let them sing for joy upon their beds.
Let the high praises of God *be* in their mouth, 6
And a two-edged sword in their hand;
To execute vengeance upon the nations, 7
And punishments upon the peoples;

---

the Hebrew may also be, and here almost certainly is, singular. That which makes the form seem plural is the survival of a final *yōd*, which really belongs to the root and not to the plural ending.

3. in the dance: LXX 'in choirs.' In primitive religions dancing played a very important part, though it is now, owing to its associations, often regarded as anti-religious: see Exod. xv. 20; Judges xi. 34: cf. Ps. cxviii. 27, and Delitzsch, *Expositor*, 1886 (2), p. 81 f. Religious dances are, at the present time, to be seen in Spain (Seville) and in other Christian countries.

timbrel: 'hand drum.' It is mentioned in connexion with dancing in lxv. 5 and Exod. xv. 20.

4. meek: so LXX, Jero., Duhm. Baethgen renders 'sorrowing ones.'

5. saints: better, 'favoured ones.'

upon their beds: resting, free from tears and sorrow at night time (iv. 4, vi. 6), but they **sing** in their beds, not fearing the treachery of false friends, or the open hostility of avowed foes.

6-9. *Joy of the righteous in their victory: resolve to avenge their foes.*

6. Whilst they praise Jehovah with their mouths they are to wield the sword with their hands: see Neh. iv. 10; 2 Macc. xv. 26 f. The Maccabees thought they were fighting the Lord's battles, just as Mohammed (at first) and Cromwell did.

mouth: *lit.* 'throat.'

two-edged sword: so LXX, Jero., Pesh.: see Judges iii. 16. The Hebrew is 'a sword of mouths,' i. e. an all-devouring sword.

7. See Isa. lxi. 2, lxiii. 4.

punishments: Heb. 'chastisements.'

8 To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with fetters of iron;
9 To execute upon them the judgement written:
This honour have all his saints.
Praise ye the LORD.

150 Praise ye the LORD.
Praise God in his sanctuary:
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
2 Praise him for his mighty acts:
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:

---

8. What is here forecasted belongs to the prophetic picture of the Messianic time: see Isa. xlv. 14, xlix. 7, 23, lx. 3 f.

nobles: *lit.* 'honoured men,' then 'honourable men': so Isa. xxiii. 8 f.; Nah. iii. 10.

9. judgement written: see on cxxxix. 16. The reference is to the judgement preordained for men by God: see Isa. lxv. 6, x. 1; Job xiii. 26.

PSALM CL.

Theme. A burst of jubilant joy.

I. *Contents*: see *Theme*.

II. *Authorship and Date.* See general remarks on Pss. cxlv–cl.

1. sanctuary: the place where Jehovah dwells, i.e. heaven (see next clause): so Delitzsch, Baethgen, &c.: see xxix. 2 and cf. parallelism. Hupfeld thinks it is the earthly temple that is meant: see xx. 2, lxiii. 2, lxxiv. 2, xcix. 1 f., 9. When Jerusalem and its temple had been destroyed God's dwelling was thought to be in heaven on the 'firm immovable firmament,' and no longer in the house, once made by human hands. Note that heaven is above the firmament: see *Hebrew Cosmology*, pp. 174 f. In both clauses of the verse it is the inhabitants of the upper heaven who are addressed.

firmament of his power: better (according to Hebrew idiom), 'His strong firmament': see on civ. 3.

2. his mighty acts: see cvi. 2, cxlv. 4, 11, 12.

his excellent greatness: Heb. 'the abundance of His greatness.'

3. trumpet: Heb. 'the ram's horn': see Introd., p. 28 ff.

Praise him with the psaltery and harp.
Praise him with the timbrel and dance: 4
Praise him with stringed instruments and the pipe.
Praise him upon the loud cymbals: 5
Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. 6
Praise ye the Lord.

---

psaltery and harp: better, 'harp and lyre': see Introd. p. 28.

4. timbrel: see on cxlix. 3.

dance: see on cxlix. 3.

stringed instruments: Heb. 'strings': so in xlv. 8.

the pipe: A.V. 'organs[1]': see Introd. p. 27. Benzinger and Nowack hold that the 'bagpipe' is meant. The LXX, Sym. assume it to be a stringed instrument, which is certainly wrong. All that we can be sure of is that the Hebrew word stands for some kind of wind instrument. The modern organ with its key-board, &c. was entirely unknown for some centuries after Old Testament times.

5. loud cymbals: *lit.* 'cymbals that can be (well) heard.' The Hebrew word occurs only here and in 2 Sam. vi. 5, and denotes metallic clappers similar to those used at the present time in Turkish military bands. Clericus, Pfeiffer, &c. think that castanets are meant; but it is more than doubtful whether castanets were known among the ancient Hebrews, though modern Arabs use them much.

high sounding cymbals: *lit.* 'cymbals having a loud, shrill sound.' Probably the same instrument is meant in both parts of the verse; both the descriptions apply to the clappers spoken of above. If we are to make a difference, it would be safest to regard the last-named instrument as smaller and sharper-toned than the other, and not (as Hupfeld, Ewald, &c. hold) the reverse.

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[1] In Tudor English the term 'organ' was applied to several musical (especially wind) instruments.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

ZION

FROM the time of the Emperor Constantine I (d. A. D. 337) it has been the custom to speak of two separate hills or mountains in the south of Jerusalem, separated by the Tyropoean or Cheesemongers' valley; that to the west, called Zion, is supposed by tradition to have been the site of the royal buildings erected by David[1], that to the east being Mount Moriah on which the temple was built. Modern travellers will be familiar with this nomenclature, as it is perpetuated in the guide-books and by the civic authorities at Jerusalem. Yet it is certainly wrong, and most misleading to Bible readers. We know from Bible accounts that the stretch of ground on which the royal palace and the adjoining structures stood was in immediate juxtaposition to the temple area: see article 'Temple' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* by the present writer. The following diagram, reproduced from the above article by permission of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, represents graphically the relative positions of the buildings erected by Solomon in the south of Jerusalem.

There could not have been a valley spanned by a bridge between the two sets of buildings, the secular and the sacred, as the old tradition implies. The modern mount Zion is much higher than the modern mount Moriah, but, according to O. T. accounts[2], the palace occupied lower ground than the temple; the old city, the city of David with its fortress, standing on ground still lower[3].

There are two different levels on the modern Haram-esh-Sherif and its southern prolongation: (1) that on which the temple was built, slightly to the west of the so-called Mosque of Omar; (2) south-east of the level just named there is another somewhat lower, and it is on this last that Solomon's palace and connected buildings were almost certainly erected. The city of David, or the fortress of Zion, stood on the western extremity of this ridge, some 1,200 feet to the south of the present wall, but on lower ground than that which held the palace. The Biblical name Zion embraced the whole area west of the Tyropoean valley on which stood the whole complex of Solomonic buildings pictured in the diagram below. Many passages in the O.T. are senseless if Zion and the temple hill were separated by such a valley as divides the modern Zion and Moriah. Zion is the 'holy mountain [1],' and the chosen habitation of Jehovah [2]: it is in Zion that Jehovah makes Himself known [3], and it is on that mountain that He is to be worshipped [4]. Since the temple was the principal feature of Jerusalem, Zion, the mountain on which it was built, came to stand

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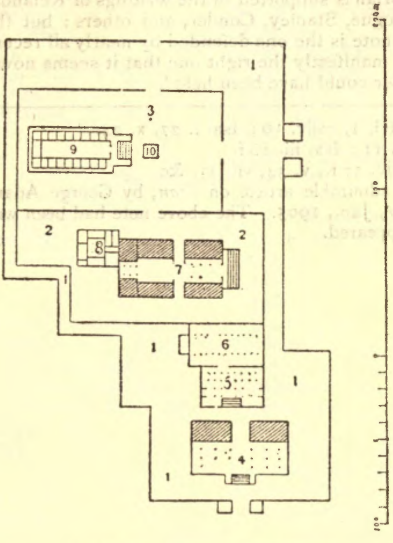
[1] 1 Kings vii. [2] 2 Kings xi. 19; Jer. xxii. 1, xxvi. 10, xxxvi. 12. [3] 1 Kings ix. 24.



Plan of Royal Buildings.

(By permission of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, from the article 'Temple' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*)

1. The Great Court.
2. The 'other' or Middle Court.
3. The Inner (or Temple) Court.
4. House of Lebanon.
5. Porch of Pillars.
6. Throne Porch.
7. Royal Palace.
8. Harem.
9. Temple.
10. Altar.

---

[1] Ps. ii. 6; Isa. ii. 2, &c.

[2] Pss. ix. 11, lxxiv. 2, lxxvi. 2.

[3] Pss. xiv. 7, xx. 2, liii. 6, &c.

[4] Ps. lxv. 1f.; Jer. xxxi. 6, &c.

for the whole city[1]. Hence the 'Daughters of Zion[2]' are the 'Inhabitants of Jerusalem.'

The identity of Zion and the temple hill is assumed in the Apocrypha[3] and also in early Rabbinical writings.

The traditional conception of the separateness of the two mountains Zion and Moriah is supported in the writings of Reland, Robinson, Ritter, de Vogue, Stanley, Conder, and others: but the view put forth in this note is the one defended by nearly all recent scholars, and it is so manifestly the right one that it seems now wonderful that any other could have been held[4].

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[1] Pss. cxxvi. 1, cxliv. 10; Isa. i. 27, x. 24.

[2] Cant. iii. 11; Isa. iii. 16 f.

[3] 1 Macc. iv. 37 f., v. 34, vii. 33, &c.

[4] See the admirable article on *Sion*, by George Adam Smith, in the *Expositor*, Jan., 1905. The above note had been written before this article appeared.

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